

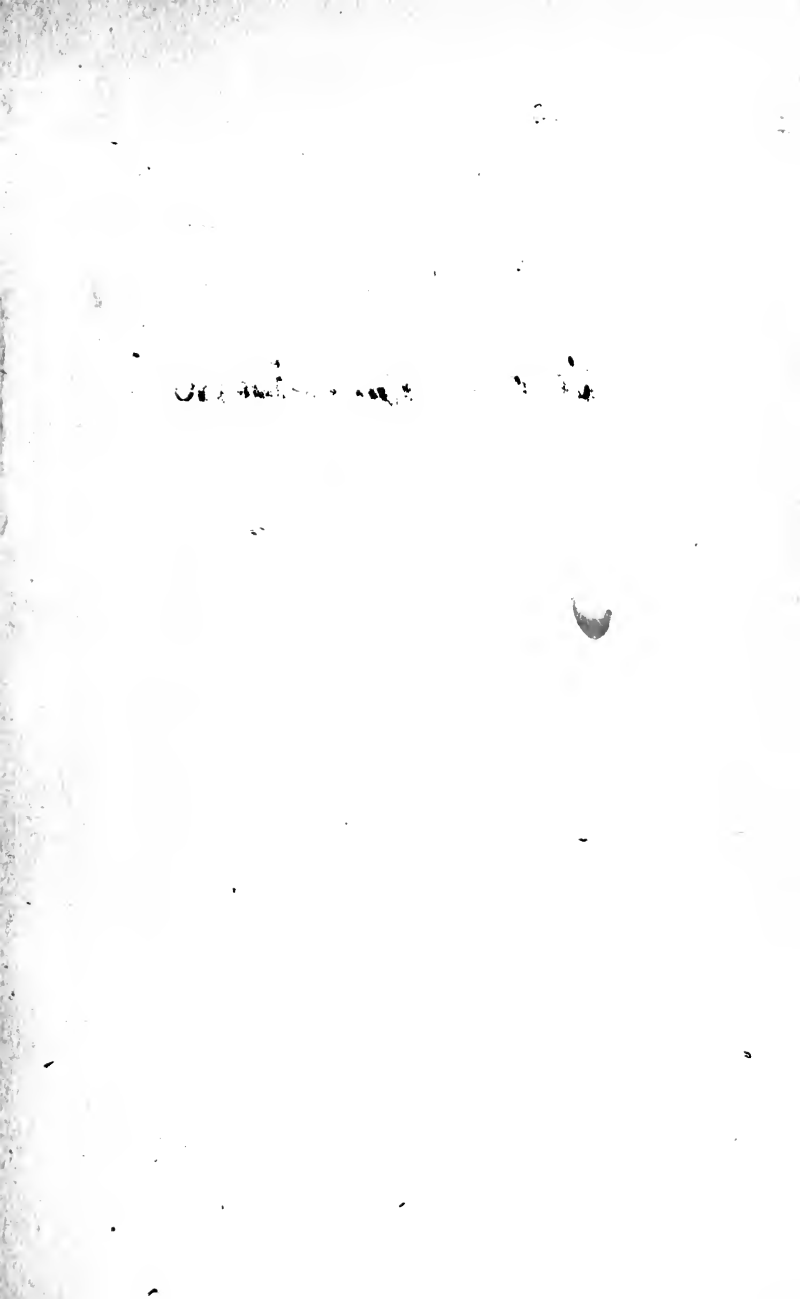
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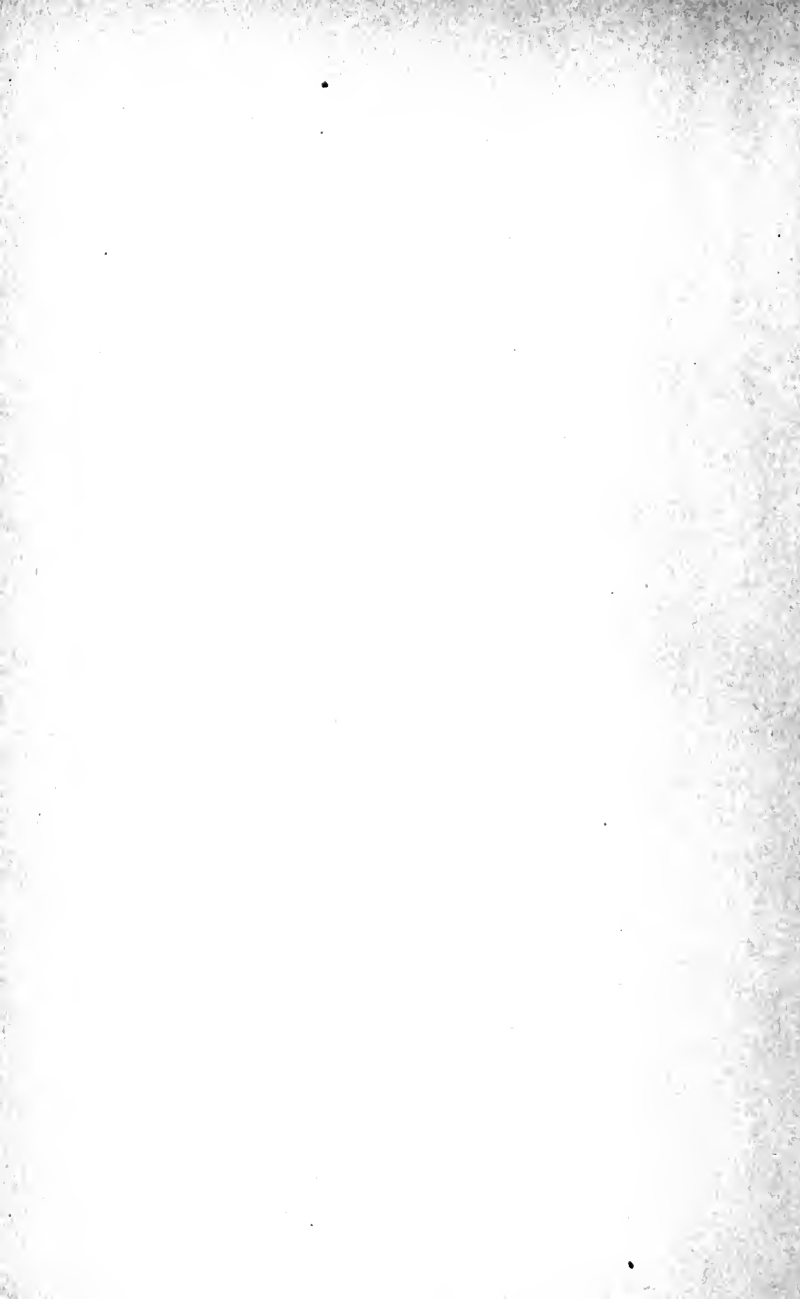
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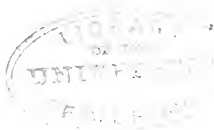




HISTORICAL EVIDENCES

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT.



AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

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Historical Illustrations

OF THE

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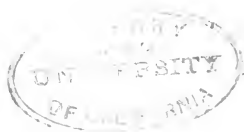
BY

REV. G. F. MACLEAR, D. D.

NO. 23.

ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

It is recorded of Lord Lyndhurst that shortly before his death he was found by a friend with a pile of infidel books upon his table. Taking up one of them, he remarked that it might seem strange for him to be so occupied, but that his mind required exercise, and that on the main issue his conviction was decided. "Of evidence, at least, he felt that he was as competent a judge as most men; and such evidence as might be adduced for the resurrection had never broken down." What this consummate judge of the value of evidence said respecting the facts of our Lord's resurrection is extended in this tract to the historical illustrations of the narrative contained in the New Testament itself which classical writers have bequeathed to us, and which coins and monumental inscriptions still further confirm. The evidential value of these illustrations, it is shown, cannot be broken down.



HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

INTRODUCTION.

So accustomed are we to regard the New Testament as one book, the work of a single writer, that we are apt to forget and overlook the variety of its contents. It consists of twenty-seven separate and independent documents, composed by eight or nine different persons at very different times and under the most varied circumstances. The works of the writers of the Old Testament fall under the head of history proper. They set before us primarily and mainly the history of a nation. In the New Testament all this is changed. The authors of the Gospels are not in any sense historians of their nation. They are biographers of Christ. Even the writer of the Acts of the Apostles confines himself to the doings of those whose business it was to spread abroad the doctrines taught by Christ throughout the world.

The points, therefore, where the documents of the New Testament touch upon history proper are not direct, but indirect, and the allusions are and must be incidental. But for this very reason they are extremely important as respects their evidential value. Why? Because, in the first place, to maintain accuracy in the wide field of incidental allusions is a matter of the utmost difficulty, and no one but an honest, truthful writer would venture on such a perilous experiment at all. Because, in the second place, historical accuracy in reference to minute incidental allusions is utterly at variance with the mythical spirit, of which the narrative contained in the New Testament is sometimes affirmed to be the product. If the whole story is a myth, fabricated *ab initio*, its composers would have had no object in maintaining historical accuracy at all, or in being careful that their facts agreed with the testimony of contemporary classical writers.

These incidental allusions may perhaps be most conveniently arranged as follows:

- (I.) Those that bear upon the political condition of Palestine generally;
- (II.) Those that refer to the Roman authorities, who are represented as exercising power over the country;
- (III.) Those that relate to its Jewish rulers;

(IV.) Those that concern the condition of the Jewish people;

(V.) Those that touch on the Greek and Roman world.

I. THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF PALESTINE.

THE political condition of Palestine at the period with which we are dealing was singularly complicated and anomalous, and its complications perplexed even the sagacious Tacitus.

We gather from Josephus that within a space of fifty years it passed through five distinct phases. First it was a single united kingdom under a native ruler;* then it was split up into a set of principalities under native ethnarchs and tetrarchs;† then it was partly amenable to such petty governors and partly reduced to the condition of a Roman province;‡ then it was once more a kingdom governed by a native sovereign;§ and eventually it was reduced to a state of complete subjection to Rome, though, according to Josephus, a power seems to have been intrusted to a surviving member of the Herodian family of superintending the temple at Jerusalem and some of the ecclesiastical arrangements.||

* Josephus, "Antiquities," 17:8, 1.

† Josephus, "Bell. Jud.," 1:33, 8; 2:6, 3.

‡ "Antiquities," 18:1, 1. § Ibid., 19:5, 1. || Ibid., 20:1-3.

It would be impossible to point to any similar period of fifty years in English history marked by so many changes, and it would not have been surprising if, supposing them to have been merely ordinary writers, those who compiled the narratives contained in the New Testament had evinced a sense of difficulty and hesitation in the face of political changes so intricate and so anomalous.

But is this what we find? On the contrary, the writers of the New Testament nowhere betray any sense of perplexity. They mark quite incidentally and without the slightest trace of strain or effort the various phases, extraordinary as they were, in the civil government of Palestine. Thus at the era of the Advent we (1) find the country subject to the sole government of Herod the Great;* then (2) we have his dominions partitioned among his sons, while one, Archelaus, reigns over Judæa with the title of *king*;† then (3) we see Judæa reduced to the condition of a Roman province, while Galilee, Ituræa, and Trachonitis continue under native princes;‡ then (4) in the person of Herod Agrippa I. we have the old kingdom§ of Palestine restored; and finally (5) we observe the whole country reduced under Roman rule, and Roman procurators|| re-

* Matt. 2:1; Luke 1:5. † Matt. 2:22. ‡ Luke 3:1.

§ Acts 12:1. || Felix, Acts 23:24; Festus, Acts 24:27.

established, while a certain degree of deference is paid to Herod Agrippa II., to whom Festus refers St. Paul's case as presenting special difficulties.*

Thus there is a remarkable *general* agreement with the statements of Josephus, and no one can study the scenes which incidentally illustrate this agreement and say they are forced or artificial. But there is far more than a mere general agreement. Palestine had not been conquered in the ordinary way. It had passed under the Roman dominion with the consent and by the assistance of a large party among the inhabitants themselves. Hence, as has been observed,† it presented not only a mixture and sometimes an alternation of Roman with native power, but a peculiar double system, extending to the administration of justice, the levying of taxes, military commands, and the coinage of the country.

Few would deny that it would need more than ordinary knowledge to describe with ease and freedom such a complicated condition of things. Accuracy in minute particulars in reference to details so unique, arising sometimes out of a dual and sometimes a triple form of government, is a striking testimony to the truthfulness of the writers. Do they stand this test? A few instances will suffice to prove this.

* Acts 25:15.

† Rawlinson's "Bampton Lectures," p. 240.

At the epoch of the incarnation the decree goes forth from the authority which alone could order it for the taxation of the Roman world.* It is carried out in Palestine under Roman authority, but respect is paid to the peculiarly Jewish custom, which required that each individual of Palestine should be enrolled in *his own city*.† Two methods are employed for marking the epoch of the commencement of the preaching of the Baptist, the year of the emperor in the capital of the West and the year of the Jewish high-priesthood in Palestine.‡ Two systems of “watches” mark the divisions of the hours of the night, the proper Jewish reckoning of three and the Roman reckoning of four periods.§ The tribute paid to Cæsar is called by one name *census*;|| the ecclesiastical tax for the support of the temple worship by another, the *didrachm* or half-shekel.¶ Judas brings a detachment of the Jewish Levitical guard** as part of the band to apprehend our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane, but Roman soldiers stand sentinel over His sepulchre.†† The Jewish hier-

* Luke 2:1.

† Luke 2:3.

‡ Luke 3:1, 2.

§ Comp. Lam. 2:19; Judg. 7:19; 1 Sam. 11:11 with Matt. 14:25; Mark 13:35.

|| Matt. 22:17; Mark 12:14: “Is it lawful to pay *tribute* to Cæsar or not?”

¶ Matt. 17:24: “They that received *the half-shekel* came to Peter and said, Doth not your Master pay *the half-shekel*?” R. V.

** John 18:3, 12, R. V.

†† Matt. 27:65.

archly condemn Him to death for blasphemy,* but possessing no longer the power of life and death, are obliged to urge a political charge against Him before the tribunal of Pilate,† who alone possessed the power of the sword. The Jewish mode of capital punishment is by stoning;‡ the Roman method, except in the case of Roman citizens,§ is by scourging and crucifixion. ||

In carrying out the crucifixion of our Lord we notice that while Roman customs are strictly maintained they are softened by the more merciful provisions of the Jewish law. The Sufferer is condemned to bear his cross; a title or superscription is affixed to it;¶ he is fastened to it with nails;** soldiers are stationed below it under the command of a centurion to see that the sentence is duly executed, and the garments of the crucified are distributed among them. But Jewish mercy softens some of the details. The potion is offered the divine Sufferer for the purpose of deadening the pain;†† the fracture of the legs, technically called *crucifragium*, is adopted to mitigate the punishment and hasten death;‡‡ the bodies of

* Matt. 26:65, 66.

† Matt. 27:2; Luke 23:2.

‡ John 10:31; Acts 7:58; 14:19; comp. Lev. 24:16.

§ Joseph., "Bell. Jud.," 2:14, 9; Livy, 33:56. || Acts 22:24, 25.

¶ Sueton., "Calig.," 32, "Titulus, qui causam pœnæ indicaret."

** This was the common practice in Palestine, as we are expressly informed by Josephus, "Bell. Jud.," 2:14, 9.

†† Matt. 27:33, 34. See Lightfoot, "Hor. Heb." ‡‡ John 19:31.

the crucified are not allowed to moulder on the cross under the action of sun and rain, or to be devoured by birds or wild beasts*—they must be removed before the evening.†

And as it is with peculiarities of custom, so it is with peculiarities of language. We find Latinisms and Hebraisms occurring, with the utmost naturalness, side by side in the same writings. We have Latin military terms, like “centurion,”‡ “legion,”§ “prætorium,”|| a palace; “custodia,”¶ a guard; “speculator,”** a soldier of the guard; “colonia,”†† a colony; Latin coins, like “quadrans,”‡‡ a farthing; “denarius,”§§ a penny; “as-sarion,”||| a farthing; Latin terms connected with the revenue, as “census,”¶¶ tribute; with military punishment, as “flagellare,”*** to scourge; Hebraisms, like “Corban,” “Rabbi,” “Rabboni,” “Raca,” “Gehenna,” “Mammon,” “Boanerges,” “Talitha cumi,” “Ephphatha,” “Hosanna,” “Cephas,” “Bar-jona.”

“Words,” as Archbishop Trench has remind-

* Hor., “Epist.,” 1:16, 48; Juv., “Sat.,” 14:77.

† Deut. 21:22, 23. This is especially witnessed to by Josephus, “Bell. Jud.,” 4:5, 2.

‡ Mark 15:39, 44.

§ Matt. 26:53; Mark 5:9.

|| Matt. 27:27; John 18:28, 33; Phil. 1:13, R. V.

¶ Matt. 27:65, R. V.

** Mark 6:27, R. V.

†† Acts 16:12.

‡‡ Matt. 5:26; Mark 12:42.

§§ Matt. 18:28.

||| Matt. 10:29; Luke 12:6.

¶¶ Matt. 17:25.

*** Matt. 27:26; Luke 15:15.

ed us, "are fossil history; they are the marks and vestiges of great revolutions," and "any one with skill to analyze the language might recreate for himself the history of the people speaking that language."* This is true also of the language of the New Testament. It is fossil history. These Latin and Hebrew words existing side by side are not artificially but naturally introduced, and illustrate the semi-Jewish and semi-Roman condition of the Holy Land and the co-existence at this particular juncture of semi-Jewish and semi-Roman ideas. Remarkable as this is, it becomes more remarkable when we reflect that only just at this period of the New Testament could this co-existence have been so strikingly marked, for "it came to an end within forty years after our Lord's crucifixion."†

II. ROMAN EMPERORS AND ADMINISTRATORS.

THE Roman emperors mentioned by name in the New Testament are Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. The Roman governors are Cyrenius or Quirinius, Pontius Pilate, Felix, Festus, Sergius Paulus, and Gallio.

Classical history attests that these persons existed at the time specified, that they bore the offi-

* Trench's "Study of Words," p. 96.

† Rawlinson's "Bampton Lectures," p. 241.

ces here assigned to them, and that the actions ascribed to them are either exactly such as they performed, or at least are in perfect keeping with their known characters.

Respecting the emperors we notice that their names occur in the right order, nor is there any trace of error respecting their chronology. From classical authors we gather that the first emperor acceded to the throne forty-four years before Tiberius, and that the reign of Claudius extended from A. D. 41 to A. D. 54. When, therefore, St. Luke places the birth of our Lord in the reign of Augustus,* and the commencement of his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius,† and when he represents Claudius‡ as having acceded to the throne before the second journey of St. Paul, he states facts which are in perfect harmony with legitimate inferences from the entirely independent statements of Tacitus§ and Suetonius.||

The carrying out of a census in the reign of Augustus is illustrated in a very striking manner by the statements of Suetonius, who records three instances¶ of a census having been held in his reign. He also mentions the fact that the emperor kept a "statistical table" or "inventory"*** of

* Luke 2:1.

† Luke 3:1.

‡ Acts 11:28.

§ Tac., "Ann.," 1:3; Suet., "Tib.," 21.

|| Suet., "Claud.," 25.

¶ Suet., "Oct.," 27.

*** Suet., "Oct.," 28.

the whole empire, which on his death was produced and read in the senate as a sort of Roman doomsday book.

That the census took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria has often been regarded as an error, and whole volumes have been written on the subject. But whatever may be the precise meaning of the verse in St. Luke,* whether we render the words *πρώτη ἐγένετο*, "took place before Quirinius was governor," or throw the emphasis on *ἐγένετο*, "first took effect," there has been no serious refutation of the view first developed by Zumpt that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria, once in B. C. 4, when he began the census, and once in A. D. 6, when he carried it to completion. His prominence on this occasion accords with the statements of Tacitus† and Suetonius that, though he was of obscure and provincial origin, yet he was a loyal soldier and won his consulship by activity and military skill, earning a triumph for his successes in Cilicia.

Of the reign of Claudius we have two notices in the Acts of the Apostles. The first relates to the famine predicted by Agabus‡ as destined to affect the whole Roman world, and states that the predicted famine actually came to pass in the reign of this emperor. Standing alone this re-

* Luke 2:2. † Tac., "Ann.," 2:30; 3:22, 48. ‡ Acts 11:28.

mark does not suggest much, but it receives a signal confirmation from the fact that the first, second, fourth, ninth, and eleventh years of the reign of Claudius were remarkable for famines in some district or other. The famine in the eleventh year was of such terrible severity that "at Rome there were provisions for no more than fifteen days," and a clamorous throng crowded round Claudius "and drove him to a corner of the forum, where they violently pressed upon him, till he broke through the furious mob with a body of soldiers." Such is the statement of Tacitus,* and it is confirmed by Suetonius† and Josephus.‡

The other incident relates to the discovery by St. Paul at Corinth§ of Aquila and Priscilla, natives of Pontus. From Pontus they had migrated to Rome, but had been driven thence by an edict of Claudius commanding all Jews to depart from the capital. What do Roman writers say on the subject? Suetonius tells us that, "owing to the tumults which the Jews stirred up at Rome at the instigation of one Chrestus, Claudius decreed their expulsion from the city."||

What does Tacitus record? He informs us¶

* "Ann.," 12:43. † Suet., "Claud.," 18. ‡ Jos., "Ant.," 20:5, 2.

§ Acts 18:2. || Suet., "Claud.," 18.

¶ Tac., "Ann.," 12:52; see Lewin, "Fasti Sacri," p. 295.

that in the year A. D. 52 "a decree of the senate was passed for the expulsion of the astrologers from Italy." That by the word "astrologers" the historian meant to indicate the Jews with others is extremely probable. For that the edict was subsequently dropped appears from the fact that we find Aquila and his wife again in Rome.* This curiously agrees with the words of Tacitus respecting the edict, for while he describes it as "stringent," he also says it "was ineffectual."

So much for the emperors. When we pass from them to the Roman governors we find not only that they too occupy their proper chronological position, but that their characters, as represented in the New Testament, agree with classical authors.

Of Quirinius we have already spoken. Pontius Pilate as an historical personage stands out clearly in the pages of Tacitus. The successor of Valerius Gratus,† he occupied the position of procurator under the proprætor of Syria for ten eventful years, from A. D. 26 to A. D. 36. His headquarters were at Cæsarea,‡ and thence he came up with his troops to keep order during the greater festivals. Between his legionaries and the Jewish people there was no love lost. His attempts to use "the Corban," or sacred fund, for

* Rom. 16:3. † Jos., "Ant.," 18:2, 2. ‡ Jos., "Bell. Jud.," 2:9, 2.

the erection of public tanks for the comfort of rich and poor,* and to crush in blood the insurrection which this caused, must have increased the general ill-will. Still, with all his shortcomings, the evangelists, consistently with historic truth, portray him as "the Roman magistrate" anxious to carry out all the regulations prescribed by Roman law. This comes out at every turn when our Lord is brought before his tribunal. Possessing only the power of a *legatus* in his own province, he has no *quæstor* to conduct the examination for him of the Great Accused. He is obliged to hear the charge in person. With his Roman sense of justice he will not consent, as the Jews desired of him,† to be the executioner before the judge. He summons our Lord within his *prætorium*. He examines him himself on the triple political charge of religious agitation, of forbidding tribute, of assuming the title of "King." The Jews bring forward neither proofs nor witnesses. He tries to discover whether the confession of the prisoner, always held desirable by Roman institutions, will enable him to take cognizance of the accusation. During the trial a message from his wife,‡ whom a relaxation of the law attested by Tacitus§ had allowed him to

* "Ant.," 18:3, 2.

† John 18:30.

‡ Matt. 27:19.

§ In early times the Roman magistrates had not been allowed

bring with him from home, warns him not to assist in shedding the blood of "that righteous man." At one point, anxious to roll off the burden of a terrible responsibility, he refers the case to the tribunal of Herod Antipas,* just as Vespasian did afterwards in another case out of compliment to Agrippa.† At another, he offers the people their choice between our Lord and Barabbas.‡ Then thinking that a punishment only less terrible than the cross, that of the Roman scourge, will satisfy the tossing, clamorous throng, he gives orders that it shall be carried out, and in his position of sub-governor, having no lictors at his disposal, he is fain to inflict it by the hands of soldiers.§ Finally, seated on the *Bema*, or judgment seat, surmounting the tessellated pavement,|| to which Roman custom attached a special importance,¶ he pronounces, as being invested with the *jus gladii*, the irrevocable word, "Let him be crucified."

At every turn quotations from classical authors

to take their wives with them into the provinces. But this rule had gradually been relaxed, and lately a proposition of Cæcina to enforce it had been rejected. Tac., "Ann.," 3:33, 34.

* Luke 23:7. † Jos., "Bell. Jud.," 3:9, 7, 8. ‡ Matt. 27:17; Mark 15:9. § See Livy, 33:36; Jos., "Bell. Jud.," 2:14, 9. || John 19:13, 16.

¶ So necessary were the tessellated pavement and the tribunal deemed to the forms of justice that Cæsar carried about with him on his expeditions pieces of marble neatly fitted and a tribunal. Suet., "Jul.," c. 46.

attest the accuracy in the details of this Roman trial. Is it less discernible in the portraiture of Pilate himself? Does he manifest a contemptuous disregard for the religious susceptibilities of the Jews? Has he not given many proofs of it before? has he not again and again evinced that contempt for the nation so strongly entertained by his patron Sejanus? has he not slain many thousands of the Jews* and "mingled the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices"?† Does he show vacillation and irresolution? What else did he display when he withdrew the silver eagles he had set up at Jerusalem? Is he terrified when he hears the crafty, well-chosen cry, "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend"?‡ is he resolved at all risks to save himself from the wrath of the gloomy, suspicious Tiberius? Does not history supply the key to his selfish terror? were not his own hands stained with blood? was it not the *leges majestatis*, the law of treason, which the emperor exacted with the most remorseless severity? The historians Tacitus and Suetonius§ supply the answer.

Take next the character of Felix. The sacred writer treads as firmly and unhesitatingly in his

* "Antiquities," 18:3, 2; "Bell. Jud.," 2:9, 4.

† Luke 13:1.

‡ John 19:12.

§ Tacitus, "Annals," 3:38; Suetonius, "Tiberius," c. 58.

description of the brother of Pallas, the favorite freedman of the Emperor Claudius, as in that of Pilate. And his statements are confirmed by classical writers. St. Paul is committed to his charge by Lysias, the military officer at Jerusalem, who in a letter explains the case. The apostle is put on his trial, and Tertullus the advocate urges the charge against him. In the course of his speech he seizes on such points in the government of Felix as could meet any praise. Josephus* helps us to understand what these were. The advocate cleverly dwells on the abuses and disorders the procurator had put down. He keeps out of sight the severity with which this had been done. Felix remands the apostle to prison, and keeps him there upwards of two years in the hope of extorting money from him. Is not this quite in keeping with the character of one of whom Tacitus says "that he indulged in every kind of barbarity and lust, and exercised the *power of a king in the spirit of a slave*" ?† Is it surprising that with the sensual Drusilla by his side he "trembled" when the apostle "reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to

* Felix during his period of office put down false Messiahs (Josephus, "Antiquities," 20:8, 6; "Bell. Jud.," 2:13, 4), the followers of the Egyptian pretender (Acts 21:38), riots between the Jews and Syrians in Caesarea.

† Tacitus, "History," 5:9. Comp. Tacitus, "Annals," 12:54.

come"?* Did not tales of his barbarity and cruelty reach the ear of the emperor, and did he not escape a severe sentence only through the influence which his brother Pallas exerted over Nero?†

The arrival of Porcius Festus in A. D. 60 as successor to Felix marks one of the most certain dates in the chronology of the Acts. His comparatively equitable and mild character, as it comes out in the sacred narrative, is attested also by Josephus, who bears witness that he tried to administer real justice and did not stain his hands with bribes. Justice and impartiality mark his dealings with St. Paul. Three days after his arrival in Syria he goes up to Jerusalem. He has already at Cæsarea‡ heard serious complaints against the apostle, and on reaching the capital he is importuned by the chief priests and elders to allow the hated prisoner to be tried at Jerusalem.§ But Festus is well aware that as a Roman citizen the apostle cannot be brought before the Sanhedrin without his own consent, and promises to give a full and fair audience to their complaints at Cæsarea. Eight or ten days afterwards he returns to the palace, and the very next day takes his seat on the tribunal to hear the case. His

* Acts 24:25.

† Acts 25:24.

‡ Josephus, "Antiquities," 20:8, 9.

§ Acts 24:3.

accusers reiterate their charges against the apostle, but have no witnesses to bring forward. Festus, perceiving the weakness of their case, proposes that the offences against the law and the temple shall be heard before the Sanhedrin, but with characteristic fairness expressly stipulates that this shall be done *in his own presence*. Then the apostle, certain that the Jews will never let him depart alive from Jerusalem, falls back on his own special privilege as a Roman citizen. He pronounces the memorable words, "I appeal unto Cæsar," and Festus loses all power over him.

The Roman law of appeal would be utterly out of place in a mythical narrative. No one but a recorder of literal facts would ever have ventured even to allude to it. Under the Commonwealth Roman law had allowed every citizen, except in certain specified cases, to appeal to the people from the sentence of a magistrate condemning him to be scourged or put to death. Under the Empire the appeal was transferred from the people to the Cæsar, and in the reign of Trajan we find Pliny, the proconsul of Bithynia, sending even those Christians who were Roman citizens to the imperial tribunal.* St. Paul, therefore, is strictly within his right, and the spirit of the Roman law fully justifies the course he now takes.

* Pliny's "Letters," 10:97.

The sacred historian does not mention any *written* appeal being handed into the court. An ordinary uninformed person might well have supposed it was necessary. But it was not so. The mere utterance of the single word "Appello"* removes the apostle's cause from the local to the imperial tribunal. Festus consults for a moment with his *consilarii*, or council of assessors,† whether the appeal is legally admissible or not,‡ and the case is at an end. We notice the same spirit of fairness in the report he makes of his prisoner's case before the vassal-king Agrippa II., and he allows the apostle a patient hearing before his guest, hoping thus to ascertain more certain details to lay before "his lord" at Rome. The very occurrence of this expression "lord" here is a "water mark" of truth in the narrative. Augustus and Tiberius had alike refused this title of despotic power, such as a master had over a slave. But Caligula was greedy of this title of absolutism; and after him it was assumed by his successors, till in the reign of Domitian§ it was assigned to the emperors by law. Every detail of the narrative bespeaks a characteristic fairness on the part of Festus, and is illus-

* Ulpian, "Digest," 44:1, 2.

† For in a few cases the right of appeal was disallowed. Ulpian, "Digest," 49:1, 16.

‡ Suetonius, "Tiberius," 33; "Galb.," 14; Cicero, "in Verr.," 2:2, 32.

§ Suetonius, "Domit.," 13.

trated by the testimony of Josephus, that he was a just as well as an active magistrate.

Equally truthful and consistent in the classic history is St. Luke's portraiture of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, during St. Paul's stay at Corinth in A. D. 53.* And, first, why does the sacred historian call him a "proconsul"? Why not "proprætor"? In a mythical narrative either title would have been equally appropriate. But what does Strabo tell us?† Achaia, we learn, had been a senatorial province under Augustus, and therefore its governor was a *proconsul*. But what does Tacitus record? According to him Achaia had been placed on the list of *imperial* provinces,‡ and therefore its supreme magistrate was a *proprætor*. Is there not some mistake? Suetonius shall solve the doubt. Claudius, he tells us, the successor of Tiberius, had not been four years in power before he restored Achaia to the Senate,§ and so gave it once more a *proconsul* for its governor. And then as regards Gallio himself, an ordinary writer, describing an imaginary character, might have been pardoned had he portrayed him as a stern and imperious governor vindicating with rigor the majesty of Roman law.

* Acts 18:12-17. "When Gallio was *proconsul* of Achaia." Revised Version.

† Strabo, 17, p. 840; Dio Cass., 53:12.

‡ Tacitus, "Annals," 1:76. § Suetonius, "Claud.," 25.

But is this how he is described in the Acts? On the contrary, we find him with easy indifference refusing to settle a quarrel between the members of a merely "tolerated religion." He declines to intervene in questions lying beyond his jurisdiction. He regards with calmness an outbreak of violence before his own tribunal. He dismisses the whole case with easy indifference. A startling portrait, *if it were not true*, of a Roman governor! But how else should we have expected the brother of Seneca to behave, whom his contemporaries* describe as popular with all men—a bright, light-hearted, charming companion, and such a friend "that those who loved him to the utmost did not love him enough"? Would a stern, imperious demeanor have been consistent with such a character?

III. JEWISH KINGS AND PRINCES.

THE Jewish kings and princes mentioned in the New Testament are Herod the Great, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, Herod Philip II., Herod Agrippa I., and Herod Agrippa II.

St. Matthew commences his narrative by telling us that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king,"† or, as St.

* Statius refers to him as "the sweet Gallio." Stat., "Sylv.," 2:7, 31; comp. Pliny, "N. Q.," 4 Præf. † Matt. 2:1.

Luke expressly styles him, "the king of Judæa."* The title here given is amply attested by the Jewish historian. Herod the Great, the second son of Antipater, who was appointed procurator of Judæa by Julius Cæsar in B. C. 47, was elected by the Romans to the governorship of Galilee, though only, according to Josephus, in his fifteenth year.† In B. C. 41 he was appointed "tetrarch" of Judæa, a title which he exchanged in the following year for that of "king,"‡ in accordance with a decree of the senate, through the influence of Antony. Having captured Jerusalem, B. C. 37, and established his authority, he won the favor of Octavius,§ the conqueror at Actium in B. C. 31, and received from him, besides several important cities, the province of Trachonitis and the district of Paneas. These facts are attested not only by Josephus, who tells us that "from the time he was declared king by the Romans Herod reigned thirty-seven years,"|| but by Tacitus also, who expressly mentions "Antony as giving and Augustus as confirming him in the regal title."¶ The reign, after the acknowledgment of his claims by Augustus, was free from external trou-

* Luke 1:5. † More probably his 25th. See Merivale's "Romans Under the Empire," 3:377. ‡ Jos. "Ant.," 14:14, etc.; "Bell. Jud.," 1:14, 4. § "Ant.," 15:6, 6; "Bell. Jud.," 1:20, 1.

|| "Ant.," 17:8, 1.

¶ Tac., "History," 5:9.

bles, but was stained by an almost uninterrupted series of acts of bloodshed perpetrated in his own family and among his subjects. The cunning he displayed towards the Magi* is illustrated by numerous other instances of cruelties, deceptions, and suspicions, which fill many chapters in Josephus.† His arrest of the chief men throughout his dominion just before his death, and his instructions to Salome that they should be butchered immediately upon his decease,‡ that thus his funeral might at least be signalized by a real mourning, reveals a bloodier temper than even the massacre of the innocents at Bethlehem, which Josephus passes over as positively insignificant when compared with other atrocities of the monarch.§ Having rebuilt Zion, as Nero rebuilt Rome, leaving a city of marble where he had found it of mud and lime, Herod had commenced in B. C. 18 a new and more costly temple than had ever yet been raised in honor of God in Palestine. "Forty and six years is it," said the Jews afterwards to our Lord,|| "since the building of this temple began." The words imply that it was not yet finished. And this is strictly true. The temple itself was built in a year and a

* Matt. 2:7, 8. † "Ant.," 15:1, 3, 6, 7; 16:4, 8, 10; 17:3, 6, 7.

‡ "Bell. Jud.," 1:33, 6.

§ Macrob., "Saturnal," 2:4.

|| John 2:20. See Sanday's "Fourth Gospel," p. 67.

half. But constant additions were made, and, though the courts and cloisters were finished in eight years more so as to be fit for the actual services of religion, we have positive evidence* that the whole structure was not finally complete till A. D. 64, or six years before its destruction by Titus.

After the death of Herod, St. Matthew informs us that Joseph, having been some time in Egypt, "arose and took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee."† From this we infer (1) that Archelaus succeeded Herod in the government of Judæa, properly so called, but (2) that his power did not extend to Galilee. Do these facts, thrown in so incidentally, agree or not agree with what Tacitus and Josephus tell us as regards the territorial arrangements made on the death of Herod?

What does Tacitus say? He tells us‡ that Herod's sons ruled over his realm under a three-fold division. What does Josephus tell us? That his kingdom was divided among three of his sons, Archelaus receiving Judæa, Samaria, and Idu-

* Sanday, p. 66. † Matt. 2:21, 22. ‡ "History," 5:9.

mæa; Antipas the tetrarchy of Galilee and Peræa; and Philip that of Batanæa, Trachonitis, and Auranitis; while Salome, sister of the great king, obtained Jamnia and Ashdod.* The rumor which is said by the evangelist to have reached the ears of Joseph† is very significant in the light of what Josephus tells us. From him we learn that till a few days before his death Herod had nominated Antipas‡ as his successor, and only in his last moments had he altered his will and mentioned Archelaus for the post.§ Moreover, by the appointment of Augustus, after hearing the claimants for the government of Judæa, Archelaus was declared ethnarch|| of Judæa. But in the interval between the death of Herod and his departure for Rome he had been saluted as king by the army,¶ a title which Augustus assured him should be his if he ruled successfully.

Once more St. Matthew adds that "when Joseph had heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod he was afraid to go thither."** Had he any ground for this fear? Josephus supplies a ready answer. He tells us that only a few days after the death of Herod, on the occasion of a tumult, Archelaus let

* Josephus, "Ant.," 17:11, 4. † Matt. 2:22. ‡ "Ant.," 17:6, 1.

§ "Ant.," 17:8, 1; "Bell. Jud.," 1:33, 7. || "Ant.," 17:11, 4.

¶ "Ant.," 17:8, 4.

** Matt. 2:22.

loose a body of soldiers upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who put to death upwards of 3,000,* and that within the sacred precincts of the temple itself. Moreover, as he began, so he went on, far surpassing his father in cruelty, oppression, and sensuality, without possessing his father's talent or energy, till he was accused by his subjects before the emperor and banished to Vienne in Gaul,† a fact which is confirmed by Strabo.‡ The fears, therefore, of Joseph, thus incidentally mentioned, were grounded on facts attested in the clearest manner by competent historians.

Of Herod Antipas what do we learn from Josephus? That he was tetrarch of Galilee and Pæraea, that he first married a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea, that he afterwards committed adultery with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Herod Philip, that this involved him in a war with Aretas, who invaded his territory and defeated him with great loss. This defeat, Josephus tells us, some of the Jews regarded as a judgment of God upon the tetrarch for the murder of John the Baptist, a good man, and held in high repute by his nation, whom the tetrarch put to death through fear of a popular insurrection.§ The genuineness of this passage is admitted even

* "Ant.," 17:9, 1-3; "Bell. Jud.," 2:1, 3. † "Ant.," 17:13, 2.

‡ Strabo, 16:2,

§ "Ant.," 18:5, 2.



by Strauss, and he observes that between the statement of the historian, who attributes the murder to fear of a popular rising, and that of the evangelist, who ascribes it to offence at John's stern rebuke of his adultery, there is no real contradiction.

The features of character developed by the tetrarch and Herodias respectively in the murder of the Baptist are strictly in keeping with all we know of them both from the Jewish historian. Herod himself is weak rather than bloodthirsty; his tyranny is mingled with timidity and cunning, the cunning of the "fox," which our Lord imputed to him.* The malice and revengeful temper of Herodias, on the other hand, are clearly brought out in the narrative. But it is worth observing that the same headstrong determination, the same reckless disregard of consequences, which induced her now to demand the brave Baptist's head led her afterwards, according to Josephus, to urge her husband to go to Rome and claim the title of "king," which had lately been given to her brother Agrippa.† Her overweening ambition was his ruin. Antipas not only failed, but was deprived of his dominions and banished to Lyons, in Gaul.

Herod Philip II., the son of Herod the Great

* Luke 13 : 32. † Jos., 'Ant.,' 17 : 7, 2; "Bell. Jud.," 2 : 9, 6.

and Cleopatra, received on his father's death the tetrarchy of Ituræa and Trachonitis. The Gospels tell us nothing to his discredit. Their silence is all in his favor and is strikingly confirmed by the positive statements of Josephus. He affirms that his rule was distinguished by justice and moderation, and that he devoted himself entirely to the duties of his office, without sharing in the intrigues which disgraced his family.*

The life of Herod Agrippa I., the grandson of Herod the Great, was marked by strange vicissitudes. Brought up at Rome, imprisoned by Tiberius for an unguarded speech,† he was released by Caligula, who gave him the territories formerly held by Philip and Lysanias, with the ensigns of royalty.‡ Afterwards, in return for important services rendered to Claudius,§ he received not only the territory of Antipas, but the government of Judæa and Samaria, so that his entire dominions equalled in extent the kingdom of his grandfather. His zeal against the church and his persecution of the apostles James and Peter, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles,|| seem at first sight to stand alone, as if they were sudden acts of bigoted hostility. But, as illustrated by the narrative of Josephus, they form

* "Ant.," 18:4, 6; 17:5, 4.

† Ibid., 18:6, 7.

‡ Ibid., 18:6, 10. § "Bell. Jud.," 2:11 2-6. || Acts 12:3.

parts of a settled policy. No sooner, we are there told, did he arrive at Jerusalem, in A. D. 42, than he dedicated in the temple the golden chain with which he had been presented by Caligula and which was of equal weight with the iron one he had worn when imprisoned by Tiberius, and distinguished himself by the strictest profession of Judaism,* paying studious court to the Jews, and especially to the Pharisees. He offered sacrifice every day, paid the expenses of certain Nazarites on the completion of their vows, abstained from every legal impurity, remitted the house-tax of the inhabitants of the capital, and enriched the new suburb of Bezetha with a wall.† It is easy, therefore, to understand how such a king would be readily roused by the Jews, whom he was so anxious to please, to strike a deadly blow at "the Nazarenes." The accusations which had been laid against Stephen, that the new Christian leader, James, spoke against the temple and the law, would be made with effect before such a zealous observer of Mosaic ritual as was Herod Agrippa.‡

* "Ant.," 19:6, 1.

† Ibid., 19:6, 3; 7, 2, 3.

‡ The expression in Acts 12:2, he slew James *with the sword*, is curiously illustrated by the Mishna. There we find it mentioned as the third of the modes of execution appointed among the Jews. "The ordinance for putting to death by the sword is as follows: the man's head is cut off with the sword, as is wont

The sudden death also of this monarch is strikingly illustrated by the Jewish historian. After he had reigned three years "over all Judæa"* he came to Cæsarea, A. D. 44, and "showed he could play the heathen there with as much zeal as he had played the Pharisee at Jerusalem." It was the occasion of a great festival, in honor, some have thought, of the return of Claudius in safety from his expedition to Britain.† On the second day‡ at early dawn he appeared in the theatre and gave audience to an embassy from the Phœnician cities of Tyre and Sidon.§ Arrayed in a royal robe of silver tissue of a truly wonderful contexture, he took his seat on the *bema* and made a set harangue to the Tyrians and Sidonians. The reflection of the sun's rays upon his gorgeous robe "spread a dread and shuddering over those who looked intently upon it, and," continues Josephus, "his flatterers presently cried out, one from one place and another from another, that he was a god. And they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious to be done by *royal command*." See Prof. Lumby's note on Acts 12:2.

* Jos., "Ant.," 19:8, 2. † The "set day" of Acts 12:21.

‡ Dion., 60:23; Suet., "Claud.," 17. § Acts 12:20.

flattery. But presently afterwards . . . a violent pain arose in his belly, having begun with great severity. He therefore looked upon his friends and said, 'I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life, while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I who was called by you immortal am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept what Providence allots as it pleases God.' When he had said this his pain became violent. Accordingly he was carried into the palace, and the rumor went abroad everywhere that he would certainly die in a little time. . . . And when he had been quite worn out with pain in his bowels for five days he departed this life.'*

The points of contact in the two accounts, that of St. Luke and that of the Jewish historian, are so striking that they deserve special attention. Josephus, who would fully sympathize with Agrippa as one who did all he could for the Jews and was in high favor with the Romans, "describes the form in which the king's malady made itself apparent at first, and has left out the more loathsome details from the death story of one who in his eyes was a great king." St. Luke, on the other hand, "has given the fuller account, be-

* Jos., "Ant.," 19:8, 2.

cause his object was to emphasize in all its enormity the sin for which the Jewish historian tells us that Herod himself felt that he was stricken."

The difference between the two narratives is "so slight and so easy to be accounted for that this extract from Josephus must always be regarded as a most weighty testimony to the historic accuracy and faithfulness of St. Luke's narrative."*

On the death of Herod Agrippa, Judæa, as we have already seen,† once more became a Roman province under Roman procurators. But a few years later, A. D. 50, the small kingdom of Chalcis was conferred by the Emperor Claudius on the son of Agrippa, Herod Agrippa II., who afterwards received other territories and the title of "king."‡ Josephus testifies to his intimacy with Festus;§ and therefore it is not surprising that the Roman procurator should avail himself of the judgment of the Jewish prince as regards the perplexing questions of Jewish law urged against St. Paul.|| The fondness of the Herods for show comes out in many passages of Josephus, and that Festus should have gratified Agrippa's love of display by a grand procession to the audience-chamber, where Berenice could sit blazing with

* Prof. Lumby on Acts 12:23.

† See above, p. 6.

‡ Acts 25:13. § "Ant.," 20:8, 11.

|| Acts 25:14-21.

all her jewels, attended by a suite of followers in all the gorgeousness of Eastern pomp, is exactly what we should have expected. The remarks of Festus on the necessity of having some definite statement to send to Cæsar as regards the appeal, and their consistency with known historical facts, have been already alluded to. Equally consistent with historic fact is the remark of St. Paul that he deemed himself happy in speaking before one who had received from his father an elaborate training in all matters of Jewish religion and casuistry.* No less consistent is the cold irony and contempt with which the Jewish king met the impassioned appeal of the apostle and his efforts to "persuade him off-hand" to be "a Christian."† The sneering banter chimes in with the temper of one who was resolved "to make the best of this world," and who, in the final struggle, like Josephus and other eminent renegades, sided with the conquerors of the nation,‡ and after the fall of the Holy City retired to Rome with the sensual Berenice, and "like Josephus may have watched from a Roman window the gorgeous procession in which the victor paraded the sacred spoils of the temple."

* Acts 26:2, 3.

† Acts 26:28.

‡ Josephus, "Bell. Jud.," 3:2, 4.

IV. THE CONDITION OF THE JEWISH NATION.

IN reference to the moral and social condition of the Jews at the period covered by the New Testament, whether we consider those who were settled in Palestine itself or those who were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire, there is not a statement advanced but what is corroborated by Josephus.

As for the Jews in Palestine itself, the national historian testifies that oppression under a foreign yoke, and especially the persecution of their religion by Antiochus Epiphanes, had produced among them a strict separation from all those that were not of the elect nation, thus inflaming their contempt and hatred for foreign customs, and at the same time raising to a high degree their national feelings and attachment to the religion of their forefathers.

Josephus describes their division into sects and the relations of these sects to each other.* A Pharisee himself, he tells us of the Pharisees, what we might infer from the Gospels, that they presented all the traits of the national character in a still more conspicuous degree, and were the most influential, especially with the common people; that they attached the utmost importance to

* "Antiquities," 13:10, 5.

a traditional oral law given to complete and explain the written law;* that they were rigorous in exacting attention to all external ceremonials, especially washings, fastings, tithes, and alms; that they believed in a future state of rewards and punishments, and acknowledged the existence of angels and spirits; and that they were excessively zealous in making proselytes, and spared no efforts in winning over believers to their faith.†

As regards the Sadducees, he not only distinctly recognizes their existence, but places their beginning in the time of Jonathan, the successor of Judas Maccabeus, B. C. 160-143. He indicates that, while they had considerable influence in the Sanhedrin, they numbered their followers chiefly among the rich and influential youths of Judæa;‡ that they denied the resurrection of the dead,§ the immortality of the soul and a state of rewards and punishments after death, and the existence of angels and spiritual beings.

With respect to the Samaritans, Josephus agrees with the sacred narrative as regards their origin, and records that they were largely increased by fugitives from the neighboring countries and by apostates and rebels against the order

* Comp. Jos., "Ant.," 13:10, 6 with Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:3, 4.

† "Ant.," 18:1, 3.

‡ "Ant.," 18:1, 4; 13:10, 6.

§ Comp. Matt. 22:23 with Jos., "Bell. Jud.," 2:8, 14; "Ant.," 18:1, 4.

of things established by Ezra and Nehemiah;* that in the troublous times of Antiochus Epiphanes they escaped the fate of the Jews by repudiating all connection with Israel and dedicating their temple on Mount Gerizim to Jupiter.† He relates many instances of the mutual animosity which brought it about that “the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans;”‡ how, in the time of Antiochus III., the Samaritans sold many Jews into slavery;§ how they effected an entrance on one occasion into the temple on the eve of the Passover and scattered human bones in the courts;|| how on another they waylaid and set upon certain Galileans whose “faces were set to go up to Jerusalem,”¶ and murdered a considerable number of them on the road.** The Jews, on the other hand, did not fall short in their recriminations, and in travelling from the south to the north they preferred to take the long circuit through Peræa rather than pass through the hated country.††

The terms in which our Lord, and St. James after him, rebukes the moral corruption of the national life find a striking counterpart in the language of Josephus.

* “Ant.,” 11:8, 2, 6, 7. † “Ant.,” 12:5, 5; comp. 2 Macc. 6:2.

‡ John 4:9. § “Ant.,” 12:4, 1.

|| “Ant.,” 18:2, 2. ¶ Luke 9:51.

** “Ant.,” 20:6, 1. †† Trench on “The Parables,” p. 311.

"The period," he affirms, "had become so prolific in iniquity of every description among the Jews that no work of evil was left unperpetrated, so universal was the contagion, both in public and private, and such the emulation to surpass each other in acts of impiety towards God and of injustice towards their neighbors."* Such was the "impudence," he says in another place, "and boldness that had seized on the high priests that they had the hardiness to send their servants into the threshing-floors to take away those tithes that were due to the priests, insomuch that it so fell out that the poorer sort of the priests died for want. To this degree did the violence of the seditious prevail over all right and justice."†

At the same time he attests the existence of a great zeal for external religion and a superstitious regard for the temple and its hallowed associations, for the festivals prescribed by the law and the sacrifices commanded to be offered.‡ He describes the proneness of the people to take fire at the slightest insult being offered to their national honor or the sacredness of their national sanctuary. The question of the lawfulness of paying "tribute to Cæsar,"§ he affirms, led to the most violent disputes, and on the arrival of Quirinius

* "Bell. Jud.," 7:8, 1.

† "Ant.," 20:8, 8.

‡ "Ant.," 18:9, 3; 20:5, 3.

§ Matt. 22:17.

in Judæa to carry out the imperial "census," a warm controversy sprang up as to the legality of the slightest submission to foreign taxation; Judas of Galilee declared such payment a direct violation of the law, and it required the intervention of a considerable number of the chief men of the nation to induce the people to submit to the impost at all.* As regards the national sanctuary and the city, not only did they resist the attempt of Pilate to introduce the silver eagles into Jerusalem† and the insane proposition of Caligula to have his statue set up in the temple,‡ but they would not allow even the younger Agrippa, though he was a friend of the nation, to raise the height of his house lest he should command a view of the temple courts. They instantly ran up a wall to shut out the prospect; and when Festus commanded them to remove it, they declared they were ready to suffer any kind of death rather than permit even the slightest insult to be offered to their national sanctuary, and appealed from him, when he was obdurate, to the Emperor Nero, who allowed the wall to stand.§

Again do we read in the Acts of the Apostles how on one occasion more than forty of the Jews bound themselves by "a curse that they would

* "Ant.," 18:1, 1.

† "Ant.," 18:8, 2.

‡ "Ant.," 18:3, 1.

§ "Ant.," 20:8, 11.

neither eat nor drink" till they had killed St. Paul.* The Jewish historian relates an incident which is almost exactly parallel to it in the reign of Herod the Great. So exasperated, he tells us, were many against the king for violating the laws of the country that ten men bound themselves by an oath to put him to death. Arming themselves with short daggers, which they hid under their clothes, they made their way into the theatre, where they expected him to arrive, intending, if he came, to fall upon him and despatch him with their weapons.† Obtaining information of the plot, Herod condemned the conspirators to the most cruel tortures. But so far from being affrighted, they affirmed they were quite ready to undergo anything he might be disposed to inflict, and patiently submitted to the most terrible torments. How little the spectacle affected the people is proved by the fact that they seized the traitor who revealed the plot and tore him limb from limb and flung the fragments to the dogs.‡ Again, just at the close of his life, certain daring youths, at the instigation of two of the most learned rabbis, Judas and Matthias, resolved at all hazards to cut down the large golden eagle, the emblem of Roman power, which Herod had placed over the principal gate of the temple. Armed with hatch-

* Acts 23:12.

† "Ant.," 15:8, 3, 4.

‡ Ibid., 15:8, 4.

ets, they lowered themselves by thick ropes from the roof and cut away the obnoxious emblem. Being brought before Herod they boldly avowed the deed and gloried in its success, declaring that the law of their country bound them to do and dare everything for their religion, and smiled at the sentence which condemned them to be burned alive.*

Do we trace again in the New Testament a confident expectation of the coming of a Deliverer in the person of the Messiah? Do we find Zacharias and Elisabeth,† Simeon and Anna,‡ the woman of Samaria,§ and the rulers of the nation alike animated by this belief? Not only does Josephus testify that during the Roman war|| there was a general expectation among the Jews, founded upon the prophecies of the Old Testament, that one of their own race and country should obtain the empire of the world, but Tacitus and Suetonius affirm that a reflection of this prophecy had become prevalent in the East. Suetonius asserts that “for a long time there had been a rumor in circulation throughout the Orient that one rising out of Judæa was destined to sway the world.”¶

* “Ant.,” 17:6, 3.

† Luke 2:25, 36.

‡ “Bell. Jud.,” 6:5, 4.

† Luke 1:13.

‡ John 4:25.

¶ Suet., “Oct.,” 94; “Vesp.,” 4.

Tacitus expresses himself almost in the self-same words, adding that the prediction was found in certain writings of the priests, and that it assured the empire of the earth to one sprung from the Jewish stock.*

So much for the Jews in Palestine. But there were also the Jews "of the Dispersion."† How wide this dispersion was may be judged from the enumeration given of the witnesses of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We find there mentioned "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, sojourners from Rome, Cretans, and Arabians."‡ In the course also of the travels of St. Paul, whether he is in Asia Minor or Greece, we find him coming across large bodies of Jewish residents at Antioch§ and Ephesus,|| at Philippi¶ and Thessalonica,** at Athens†† and Corinth.‡‡

What light do historical writers throw upon these facts? Curtius tells us that Alexander the Great located great numbers of the chosen people

* Tacitus, "History," 5:13.

† [Revised Version], John 7:35; Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1.

‡ Acts 2:9-11.

§ Acts 13:14.

|| Acts 19:1, 10.

¶ Acts 16:12.

** Acts 17:1.

†† Acts 17:17.

‡‡ Acts 18:4.

in his new city of Alexandria. Josephus testifies that Seleucus Nicator invited them to Antioch in Syria,* and that Antiochus the Great removed two thousand Jewish families from Babylon to Lydia and Phrygia.†

“The holy city, the place of my nativity,” writes Herod Agrippa I. to Caligula,‡ “is the metropolis, not of Judæa only, but of well nigh every other country, by means of the colonies which have been sent out of it from time to time—some to the neighboring countries of Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, and Cœle-Syria—some to more distant regions, as Pamphylia, Cilicia, Asia as far as Bithynia, and the recesses of Pontus; and in Europe, Thessaly, Bœotia, Macedonia, Æolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, together with the most famous of the islands, Eubœa, Cyprus, and Crete; to say nothing of those who dwell beyond the Euphrates. For, excepting a small part of the Babylonian and other satrapies, all the countries which have a fertile territory possess Jewish inhabitants, so that if thou shalt show this kindness to my native place thou wilt benefit not one city only, but thousands in every region of the world, in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, on the continents

* Jos., “Ant.,” 12:3, 1.

† “Ant.,” 12:3, 4.

‡ As reported by Philo Judæus, “Legat ad Caium,” pp. 1031, 1032, quoted by Rawlinson, “Bampton Lectures,” p. 248.

and in the islands, on the shores of the sea and in the interior.”*

So much for the extent of their dispersion. As for the national peculiarities which they retain in the lands whither they are scattered, these too are abundantly illustrated. As we find them described in the New Testament, so we find them in the pages of Josephus and Philo, of Horace and Juvenal, of Tacitus and Suetonius. In these writers we come across them as in the Acts, partly as native Jews, partly as proselytes;† they have their places of worship, sometimes called synagogues, sometimes “proseuchæ”‡ or oratories, either by the seaside§ or the banks of a river. At Jerusalem the Jews of the “Diaspora” have a synagogue specially assigned to them, and at Rome they appropriate a whole quarter.

V. THE GREEK AND ROMAN WORLD.

BUT it is not in reference only to Palestine and the elect nation that we notice the conspicuous accuracy of the writers of the New Testament. It comes out also with equally striking

* Comp. also Philo “in Flacc.,” p. 971, E.

† Jos., “Ant.,” 20:2; “Bell. Jud.,” 7:3.

‡ Comp. Juv., “Sat.,” 3:279.

§ In the decree of the Halicarnassians, as reported by Josephus, “Ant.,” 14:10, 23, Jews are allowed to construct oratories (*proseuchæ*) by the seaside, according to the custom of their nation.

force in their description of the Greek and Roman world.

Thus let us follow St. Paul to any of the places which he visited during his missionary journeys, we find the scenes described fully illustrated, sometimes by the actual words of classical poets and historians, sometimes by ancient coins and the inscriptions on ancient monuments.

Thus let us follow him to Cyprus, where he landed on his first missionary journey. From Salamis, on the eastern coast, he makes his way to Paphos, at the southwestern extremity of the island, the seat of the Roman Government and the residence of the Governor, Sergius Paulus. What is the title the writer gives to him? He calls him a *proconsul*.* Is this correct? At first we might think not, for Dio Cassius tells us that originally it was an imperial province and therefore governed by a *proprætor* or *legatus*.† But after a while we find that Augustus restored Cyprus to the senate in exchange for Dalmatia,‡ from which time forward its governors were *proconsuls*. The sacred writer, therefore, is quite correct, and he is still further confirmed by an extant Cyprian coin of the reign of Claudius which bears this title and an inscription which has been found supplying us with the names of two addi-

* Acts 13:7, R. V.

† Dio Cassius, 53:12.

‡ Dion, 59:4.

tional governors of the island, who likewise bear the title of proconsul.

The same title with equal correctness is applied to the governors of the provinces of "Achaia"* and Roman "Asia,"† both of which Dio Cassius places among senatorial provinces. But the same authority, supported by Strabo, affirms that Syria, which the apostle had just left before sailing to Cyprus, was an imperial province, and therefore governed by a *proprætor*. Now, on turning to the narrative in the Acts, what do we find? No such title as proconsul is ever applied by the sacred writer to Quirinius, the governor of Syria, or to Pilate, Felix, and Festus, the procurators of Judæa, which was a dependency of that great and unsettled province.

Proceeding from Cyprus to Asia Minor, the apostle reaches Antioch in Pisidia.‡ This town, being of considerable importance, had been advanced by Augustus, like Alexandria-Troas§ and Philippi,|| to the dignity of a Roman *colony*. Originally designed as military safeguards of the frontiers and to check insurgent provincials, Roman colonies were miniature resemblances of the imperial city and parts of the fortifications of the empire. The title of proconsul would have been

* Acts 18:12.

† Acts 19:38.

‡ Acts 13:14.

§ Acts 16:8.

|| Acts 16:12.

utterly inapplicable to the governor of a Roman colony, and the writer of the Acts *never so uses it*. At the Pisidian Antioch those in authority are termed "the chiefs of the city."* At Philippi St. Paul and his companions are dragged into the market-place before "the rulers,"† and this general term not being sufficient, the special members of the magistracy are indicated in the next verse by the title "prætors."‡ These were the "duumviri," specially appointed, as Cicero tells us, to preside over the administration of justice, in cases where there was no appeal to Rome, in *the colonies of the empire*, who, like the one described in Horace,§ at Tivoli, arrogate to themselves the title of "prætors." When some Greek title was necessary, as at Philippi, the term *στράτηγος* would naturally be accepted, and this is the exact term employed in the Acts.||

Everything that befell the apostle at Philippi reminds us that we are in a Roman "colony." The Jews, with the contemptuous religious tolerance of the period, are allowed to have their *proseucha* or "place of prayer" outside the gate.¶ The "prætors" command that the apostle and

* Acts 13:50.

† Acts 16:19.

‡ See the Revised Version in the margin of Acts 16:20, 22.

§ Hor., "Sat.," 1:5, 34.

|| Acts 15:20, 22, 35, 36, 38.

¶ Acts 16:13, see above, p. 46.

his companions be beaten with "the rods"* of the Roman lictor; and the use of this particular word is an indication that St. Luke was aware of this special kind of scourging, and perhaps beheld the infliction. The "inner prison," into which the prisoners are thrust, foul and loathsome and probably underground, recalls the Tullianum of the capital.† The "stocks" where-with their limbs are confined are what the Romans called *nervus*, which we often find mentioned in Roman comedy.‡ The duumviri, alarmed by the earthquake, send on the following morning their servants§ to release the prisoners. St. Paul pleads that he and his companions have been publicly scourged, without any form of trial and uncondemned, in direct violation of Roman law, a violation which, even in the instance of the Catilinarian conspirators, brought so much odium upon Cicero.|| He still further insists that their rights as Roman citizens have been infringed;¶ and the prætors, alarmed at what they had done, and dreading exposure before the emperor, whom all fear, hasten to the prisoners and beg them to de-

* Acts 16: 22, R. V. This is one of the occasions, no doubt, to which St. Paul alludes, 2 Cor. 11: 25: "Thrice was I *beaten with rods*."

† Livy, 29: 22.

‡ Plaut., "Capt.," 3: 5, 71.

§ The lictors, "rod-bearers," who had scourged the apostle the day before.

|| Cic., "ad Fam.," v. 2.

¶ Acts 16: 37.

part from the city, and the apostle realizes the truth of Cicero's words: "How often has this exclamation, *I am a Roman citizen*, brought aid and safety even among barbarians in the remotest part of the earth!"* Thus the political atmosphere of the Roman colony is wholly Roman.

"Nor," it has been observed,† "is this feature entirely lost sight of when we turn from St. Luke's narrative to St. Paul's Epistle. Addressing a Roman colony from the Roman metropolis, writing as a citizen to citizens, he recurs to the political franchise as an apt symbol of the higher privileges of their heavenly calling, to the political life as a suggestive metaphor for the duties of their Christian profession."‡

Very striking is the contrast between the political allusions at Philippi and those at Thessalonica, which the apostle visits so soon after his release. Thessalonica is not a Roman colony, but a "free city" like Tarsus, the Syrian Antioch, Ephesus, and Athens. Here the political atmosphere is not so wholly Roman. The town contains the chief synagogue of the Jews in this part of Macedonia, while the Greek proselytes and the

* Cic., "*in Verrem*," v. 66.

† Bishop Lightfoot's "Commentary on the Philippians," p. 51.

‡ Comp. Phil. 1:27, "*Only behave as citizens* worthily of the gospel of Christ," R. V., margin, Phil. 3:20, "Our citizenship is in heaven."

influential women are conspicuous. The Jews, furious at the spread of the obnoxious tenets of the apostle, gather together a throng of idlers from the rabble,* throw the town into an uproar, and falling upon the house of Jason, where the apostle was lodging, seek to drag him and his companion before "the assembly of the people," or "the Demos." The occurrence of this term shows the historic truthfulness of the narrative. The general characteristics of a "free city" are maintained. But besides "the Demos," the town has its supreme magistrates. Who are these? Had the writer termed them "proconsuls" or "proprætors" he would have involved himself in a considerable error. But he does nothing of the kind. He calls them "politarchs,"† a title not found in books from which an impostor might have gathered the fact. Is he, then, guilty of any mistake? Evidence found only on ancient monuments and accidentally brought to light in modern times attests his fidelity to facts. An inscription still legible on an archway in Thessalonica gives this very title, "politarchs," to the magistrates of the place, informs us of their number, and mentions the names of some who bore the office not long before the day of St. Paul. Thus the title, as corroborated by monumental history,

* Acts 17:5.

† Acts 17:6, 8.

is perfectly correct. And what is the charge urged before these magistrates against the apostle? Nothing is heard of religious ceremonies which the citizens, being Romans, may not lawfully adopt.* All the anxiety both of people and magistrates is turned to the one point of showing their loyalty to the emperor.† No lictors with rods and fasces appear upon the scene, as at Philippi, to execute the command of Roman officers. A mixed mob of Greeks and Jews are anxious to show themselves "Cæsar's friends;" and when they have "taken security" of Jason for his good conduct, they are satisfied to let the accused go free.

From Thessalonica let us accompany the apostle to Athens. Here it is said of him that "his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols."‡ Classical authors illustrate to the full the fact here stated. Pausanias, who visited the city about fifty years after the apostle, tells us how, at the very entrance of the Peiraic Gateway, temples of the gods confronted the traveller: here one sacred to Neptune, there one to Minerva, there a third to Ceres. On passing the

* Acts 16:21.

† Acts 17:7. The Julian laws had greatly extended the sweep of the charge of treason, which charge Tacitus tells us "then crowned all indictments." Tacitus, "Ann.," 3:38.

‡ Acts 17:16, R. V.

gate the eye rested on the sculptured forms of many deities, while on entering the Agora and looking up to the Areopagus, or forward towards the Acropolis, a series of sanctuaries was visible. The Areopagus itself might be called, in the words of Xenophon, "one entire altar, sacrifice, and votive offering to the gods;" and it is plain that the Roman satirist hardly exaggerated when he said it was "easier to find a god at Athens than a man."* But we are confronted not merely with the religion but the philosophy of Greece. The Epicureans, with one of whom Cicero lodged on the occasion of his visit to the city, and the Stoics, whose "painted cloister" figures in the writings of Lucian, encounter the apostle. They convey him to the Areopagus, and with that national curiosity to learn the latest novelty which Cleon† charges against his countrymen and Demosthenes‡ alludes to in more than one of his orations, desire to know what were the strange doctrines which the apostle taught and the strange gods whom he announced.

With singular tact the apostle, taking "the pebble out of their own brook," to use the words of Chrysostom, makes an inscription on an altar

* Compare also Livy, 45:29.

† "Thuc.," 3:33.

‡ "Phil.," 1:4, 5. He complains that his countrymen were in the habit of playing the part of spectators in displays of oratory, and listeners to stories of what others had done.

which the Athenians had erected to "an unknown god" a text for his discourse and proclaims to them Him whom they ignorantly worshipped. We have abundant evidence of the existence at Athens of such altars as the apostle describes. Treating of one of the ports of Athens, Pausanias affirms* that there were three "altars to gods styled unknown," and in this agrees Philostratus in his life of Apollonius.† Thus few as are the verses in the Acts containing a description of the Athenians and of their city, the incidental allusions are singularly truthful and very skilfully portray the leading features of Athenian character.

The sacred writer moves with equal ease and freedom when he describes the tumult in the Ephesian capital of Roman Asia. Coins current at the date when the Acts of the Apostles was written, and now existing, are stamped with the image of the Ephesian Artemis, the prolific "mother of life," the presiding deity of the famous temple in the city, often described by classical historians as one of "the wonders of the world." Inscriptions brought to light by recent explora-

* Pausanias 1:1, 4.

† He says, "At Athens there are erected altars for unknown gods." Prof. Lumby quotes a Latin inscription on an altar at Ostia, now in the Vatican, "*Signum indeprehensibilis dei*," which is very like the inscription alluded to by the apostle.

tions* contain the remarkable biblical title of *Νεώκορος*,† applied to Ephesus as “the guardian of the shrine of her whose image was reported to have fallen down from heaven.” Little models of her shrine, we further learn from classical authors, were made by the silversmiths and worn as ornaments and amulets, while mysterious symbols, called “Ephesian letters,” copied from the inscriptions on various parts of the image, were deemed a safeguard against demons and all kinds of evil. But the sacred historian is also equally accurate as regards the political status of the city. Ephesus, as we have seen,‡ was a “free city,” and it retained even under the Romans its old democratic constitution, and Josephus quotes a letter of Dolabella to “the senate, magistrates, and *people* of the Ephesians.”§ In strict accordance with this we find “the proconsuls” spoken of,|| and “the town-clerk,” or “recorder,” and the Asiarchs,¶ who, like the ædiles at Rome, presided over the games and held a kind of sacerdotal position. The tumult in the theatre, the disorderly cries of the rabble, the business-like address of the town-clerk, the allusion to the assize courts,** the

* See Wood’s “Ephesus.”

† Acts 19:35; “temple-keeper” in the R. V.

‡ See above, p. 51.

§ Acts 19:38, R. V.

‡ “Ant.,” 14:10, 12.

¶ V. 31, R. V., margin.

** V. 38, Revised Version.

fear of the displeasure of the Roman Government, all these minute and incidental touches are consistent alike with each other and with contemporary historical and monumental illustrations.

Or if we turn to the great capital of the West, how true are the incidental allusions to the details of life there and the imperial system! Every step the apostle takes after reaching Puteoli, the great emporium of the Alexandrian corn-ships, as a letter of the philosopher Seneca attests, lies through scenes immortalized in classic history, which no writer of a feigned narrative would have dared to press into his service. The courteous centurion* delivers up his charge on his arrival at the imperial city, and the favorable way in which he could speak of Paul doubtless contributed to the fact that he was kept separate from the rest of the prisoners and allowed to take up his abode in a hired lodging with the soldier to whom he was chained.† What contradiction can be alleged here with classical writers? Seneca‡ and Taci-

* The centurions mentioned in the New Testament are uniformly spoken of in terms of praise, whether in the Gospels or the Acts. It is interesting to compare this with the statements of Polybius (6:24), that the centurions were chosen by merit, and so are men remarkable not so much for their daring courage as for their deliberation, constancy, and strength of mind; who, not eager in beginning a battle, would keep their ground, however hardly pressed, and determine to die rather than leave their post.

† Acts 28:16, 30, R. V. ‡ "De Tranquill.," 10; "Epist.," 5.

tus* alike inform us that according to the rules of the *custodia militaris*, a species of custody introduced at the commencement of the empire, prisoners were commonly fastened by a chain passed from their right wrist to the left wrist of their keeper. Intolerably irksome as confinement with this "coupling-chain" must have been, and for a Jew far more painful than for a Gentile, the apostle "redeemed the time" and converted even his bonds into an occasion of making known his cause and the message of the gospel to the various soldiers to whom in succession he was chained day after day and night after night.† What was the result? The "Word" found its way to the imperial guards, the prætorian regiments, and into "Cæsar's household."‡ Does Tacitus contradict this as an impossibility? He distinctly tells§ us that Tiberius, in his capacity of "prætor," or commander-in-chief, concentrated the cohorts of the prætorian guards outside the Colline gate at the northeast of the city. And as for the "household of Cæsar,"|| the sepulchral columbaria, which late researches have laid bare at Rome, have illustrated in a most striking manner the number and the variety of the employments of the thousands of slaves and freedmen included in

* Tac., "Ann.," 4:28.

† Farrar's "St. Paul," 2:391.

‡ Phil. 1:13; 4:22.

§ Tac., "Ann.," 4:2.

|| Phil. 4:22.

the "Domus Augusta." Nay, several of the names found among those in these exhumed recesses occur also in the long list of friends saluted by St. Paul some three years before in his Epistle to the Romans;* and if we assume with Bishop Lightfoot that the Epistle to the Philippians† was written soon after the arrival of the apostle in the metropolis, the members of Cæsar's household who send their salutations to Philippi may be looked for in the same catalogue and illustrated by the same monumental testimony.

VI. GENERAL CONCLUSION.

THE historical illustrations which it has been possible to review within the compass of this tract are a few out of many that might be brought forward. But when we look back, even upon the short course that we have traversed, we have seen enough to convince us of their evidential value. There is no disputing the fact that short as is the period covered by the writers of the New Testa-

* In Rom. 16:8 we have *Amplias*, a contraction of *Ampliatius*. The columbaria give among those in the imperial household AMPLIATVS. HILARI. AUGUSTOR. LIBERTI. SERV. VILICUS; *Urbanus*. TI. CLAVDI. VRBANI. SER. MENSORIS. ÆDIFICIORVM; *Stachys*. STACHYS. MARCELLÆ. MEDICVS; *Tryphæna*. D. M. TRYPHENÆ. VALERIA. TRYPHENA. MATRI. B. M. F. ET VALERIVS. FVTIANVS; and so with many others. See Lightfoot's "Philippians," pp. 172-174.

† Lightfoot's "Philippians," p. 171.

ment it falls strictly within the domain of history and abounds in the most complicated phases of the political, moral, social, and religious life of the Jewish nation, and could not fail to have occasioned the greatest perplexity to an ordinary narrator.

There is no disputing also the fact that the writers of the New Testament handle these phases with an absence of all strain or effort. They "move easily and freely in their armor," and allude incidentally and naturally to numberless little incidents bound up with special times, occasions, and circumstances, each having its own local or national or religious or political coloring, each marked by the most precise and graphic touches, which no marvellous skill of adjustment and no perfection of artistic power in that or any other age could have elaborated unless they were dealing with strictly historical facts and as true men were dealing truly with actual events occurring in their own times.

There have been, it must be allowed, signal triumphs won by the genius of poetic and literary imagination. But in all literature there is no other instance of the existence of a number of separate and independent documents bound up in a single volume, relating to an historical period, which had its records, its archives, and its monu-

ments, and purporting to give an account of contemporaneous events, that can be shown to teem with such minute and truthful incidental allusions to facts, at first sight of the most insignificant import, but which on examination are found to have momentous bearing on those events.

Every quotation from Josephus, Tacitus, or Suetonius, every fresh archæological exploration in Palestine, Asia Minor, or Greece, only serves to illustrate the minute accuracy with which their titles are given to Roman procurators and pro-consuls, Greek "politarchs" and Asiatic ædiles, and to demonstrate the fidelity with which dual systems of government, of military forces, of capital punishment, of language, and of religious life are described as blended together and coexisting side by side, at the only period when that coexistence was possible, among the strangest of all strange people, the Jewish nation, whether living in its own land or scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

When we find these numberless incidental allusions receiving such striking and unexpected confirmation we are placed in possession of another link in the chain of evidence which convinces us of the reality of the historical foundation on which Christianity rests and the truth of the gospel story.

That story is in its outline attested by classical authors of repute, and this attestation remains certain and indisputable, even supposing the New Testament had never been written at all! We must destroy the "Annals" of Tacitus, the "Lives" of Suetonius, the "Letters" of Pliny, if we wish to get rid of their testimony that in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius one called Christ existed;* that Judæa was the place of his teaching; that he was put to death at the command of Pontius Pilate;* that in spite of his death his doctrines rapidly spread throughout the Roman world;* that they attracted a vast number of converts; that, in consequence, the ancient sacrificial system gradually disappeared; that the Christians worshipped Christ as a God,† and for his sake suffered cruel persecution.‡

But what fact is more miraculous in the true sense of the word than this, that the three short years of the public life of Him whose career was thus cut short by a cruel and infamous death should have sent forth an influence which has changed the face of the Western world, and that his personality should be at this moment the most potent force in the present age?

Is it possible to believe that the narrative of

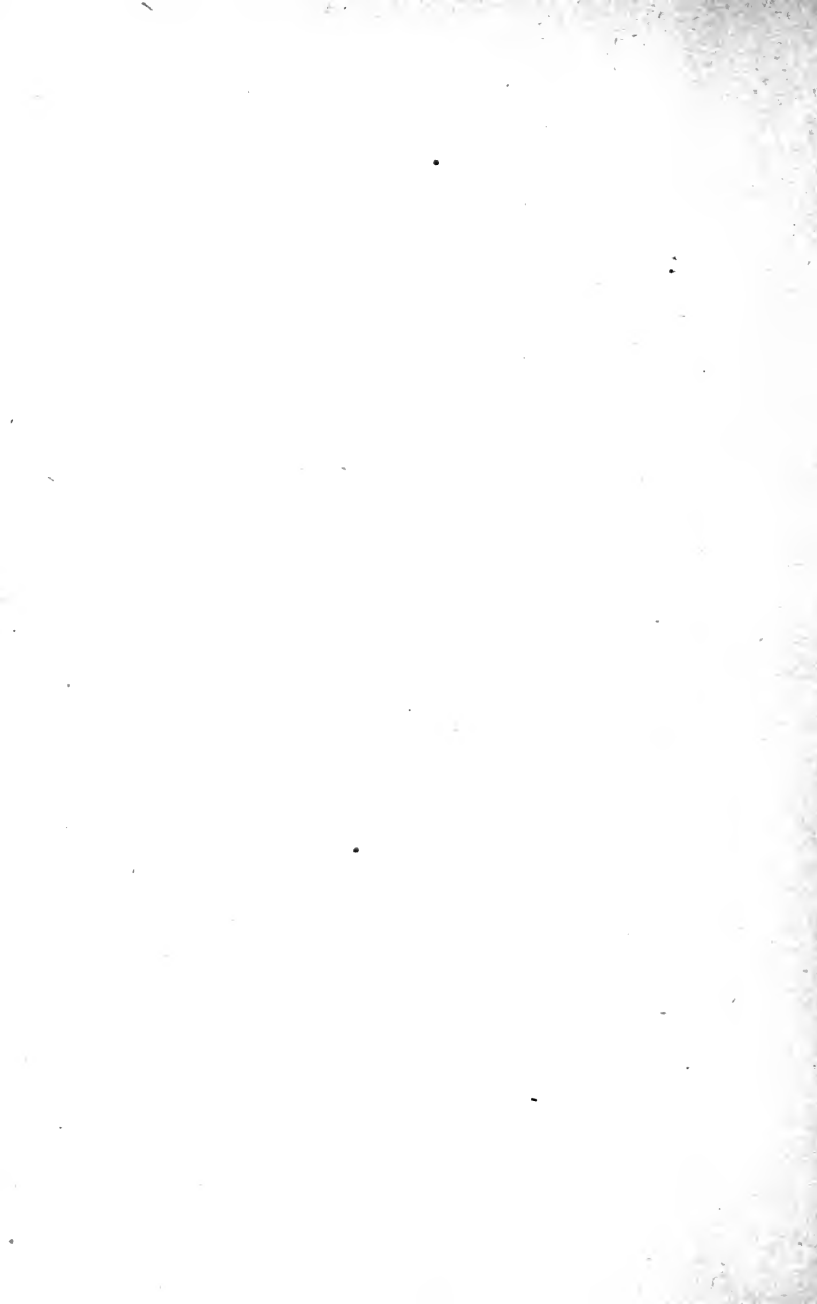
* Tac., "Ann.," 15:44. † Pliny's "Letter to Trajan," 10:97.

‡ Tac., "Ann.," 15:44; Suet., "Neron.," 16.

his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and of the foundation of his church, which at this moment notoriously exists, could have been described by the writers of the New Testament with a wealth of incidental allusions to the most complicated political and historical facts, attested in many of the minutest particulars alike by classical historians and by monumental and numismatic inscriptions, and at the same time be untrue? Is this conceivable?

There can be but one answer to the question. Once grant that "the signs"* which our Lord is said to have "wrought" he did truly perform "in the presence of his disciples," and that he is "the Christ, the Son of God,"* and we have a consistent explanation of the records and of the divine Person whose life and ministry the evangelists portray. On any other supposition the existence of the New Testament Scriptures, thus singularly confirmed from so many unexpected quarters, presents us with a literary phenomenon unparalleled in the history of the world.

* John 20:30, 31.



THE
CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

A RELIGIOUS STUDY.

BY
REV. HENRI MEYER, D.D.

ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

THE tract presumes a widespread interest in the character and life of Jesus, and proposes to answer the question, Who is he? The answer is to be sought in our four Gospels.

It is shown that Jesus was the ideal man, that he shared our bodily constitution and our sinless mental experiences, yet that he was perfectly free from the sin which has characterized the whole race. His zeal, his wisdom, his courage, his faithfulness, his compassion and tenderness, are illustrated from the Gospels. His sincerity, taken in connection with his declarations concerning himself, is held to establish his sinlessness not only in action but in heart.

It is then shown that Jesus, according to his own profession, stood in a unique and intimate relation to the Father. Not only his declarations regarding himself, but his discourses and miracles, prove his divine authority. He was the Son of man, but he was also the Son of God.

These conclusions are shown to lead up to the final assertion of the tract, that Jesus is not only the Hebrew Messiah, but the Redeemer of mankind. His sufferings and death are sacrificial in their character. The gift of the Spirit and the growth of the church are the pledge of his glorious second coming.

The four Gospels are thus shown to concur in setting forth the one Saviour, perfect alike in humanity and Deity.

The tract concludes by representing the one divine Saviour, to whom the Gospels bear witness, as the true Friend of man both in life and in immortality.

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS.*

“Then they said unto him, Who art thou?” JOHN 8:25.

NEVER was more interest felt than now in the all-important question, Who and what was Jesus of Nazareth? “What think ye of Christ?” was an inquiry propounded during his earthly ministry, and an inquiry to which various and conflicting answers were given. But as there was only one satisfactory answer given at that time, so is it found to-day that every reply inconsistent with the declarations of Jesus himself fails to endure the test of a candid and careful examination. It is characteristic of the time in which we live that thoughtful persons not only inquire with interest concerning Christ, but that they speak of him in terms which betoken respect. Even unbelievers acknowledge the claims of our Lord Jesus to their

* Abridged from “Le Christ des Évangiles,” Étude Religieuse par H. Meyer, D. D., Paris, 1880. By the Rev. J. Radford Thomson, M. A.

best attention and consideration. There is a widespread conviction among men of intelligence that some reasonable explanation of the facts in which Christianity originated ought to be sought and if possible attained. The problem has tended more and more to centre in the person and the earthly career of Jesus of Nazareth.

The question, What are we to believe concerning Jesus? is then a question not to be neglected or set aside. But where shall we seek the answer? Inquirers have too often given attention chiefly to the teaching of theologians, to the traditions current among Christians, which may be correct, but which may also in some measure be incorrect. And they have too often been influenced, if not determined, in the conclusion to which they have come by their own imaginations, prepossessions, or prejudices. Now the proper method by which it becomes us to seek the true answer to the question proposed is the method of historical inquiry. We wish to know the facts—the truth. We should therefore apply ourselves to the study of the four Gospels, which we have good reason for regarding as containing a credible account of Jesus, based upon the authority of his contemporaries. The words of Jesus himself, as recorded in these documents, must be deserving of very special consideration.

I.

JESUS THE PERFECT SON OF MAN.

What is the impression concerning the character and mission of Jesus of Nazareth which the student receives from a careful perusal of the several records of his life? It is noticeable that he habitually spoke of himself as "the Son of Man." What can we understand from this but that he was not only partaker of our nature, and "the second Adam," but that he consciously realized the ideal of human nature and life?

How thoroughly our Lord Jesus participated in the lot of humanity! He occupied a lowly station; as he himself on one occasion declared, he "had not where to lay his head." Matt. 8:20. He was known as a friend of the poor and even of the despised. Matt. 11:19. Jesus shared the sinless infirmities of our bodily nature. It is expressly recorded that after the temptation he hungered. Matt. 4:2. At the well of Sychar he thirsted, and asked the Samaritan woman to give him to drink. John 4:6, 7. On one occasion he was crossing the Lake of Galilee in a boat, and, overcome by weariness, he fell asleep in the stern of the vessel, and slept amid the raging storm that arose so that he had to be awakened. Mark 4:38.

Jesus knew also by his own experience the mental emotions which are distinctive of our human nature. He was capable of wonder and astonishment; he marvelled at the unbelief of some among his hearers. Sometimes he was troubled in spirit. John 12 : 27; 13 : 21. There were occasions when his righteous soul was filled with a holy indignation because of the sinful conduct of the professedly religious. Matt. 23; Mark 3 : 5. He wept tears of sorrow and sympathy, both in the presence of human calamity and grief, John 11 : 35; Matt. 20 : 34, and in the prospect of approaching retribution about to overtake the negligent and irreligious. How Christ's soul was affected by the events and the experience of human life, and by the special trials which he passed through, is manifest from the narratives of the evangelists. He was no stranger to spiritual conflict, for at the commencement of his ministry he encountered in solitude the assaults of the tempter, Matt. 4 : 1-11; Mark 1 : 13, and on the eve of his passion he endured the agonies of Gethsemane. Matt. 26 : 36-46. The deepest woe of which our nature is capable was transcended by the Saviour's anguish upon the cross, when the bitter cry was wrung from him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27 : 46. There was in Jesus nothing of the stoic's disdain of suffering.

He was the "man of sorrows," a true member of this suffering humanity, a brother to all men.

It was in the midst of this life, so truly human, that Jesus realized the moral ideal of humanity.

But while he shared our human lot, our human feelings, the Lord Christ had no part in our defects, our errors, our falls. This is abundantly proved by the record of the evangelists. On one occasion, when challenged by a Pharisee to declare the chief commandment of God, he answered by quoting the Old Testament injunction, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Matt. 22:37, 38; Mark 12:29, 30; Luke 10:25-27. This commandment he himself perfectly obeyed. Intimate indeed was Christ's communion with God. Prayer was the atmosphere he breathed, it was indeed the soul of his life, Mark 1:35; Luke 3:21; 5:16; 9:18, 29; 22:44; John 11:41, 42; 17:9, 20; he even sometimes passed a whole night in prayer. Luke 6:12. His obedience to the divine will was filial and perfect. "I seek," said he, "not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." John 5:30. It was his daily food to do his Father's will. John 4:34. He could sincerely say, "I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." John 14:31.

A being so holy could not but have been often wounded to the heart by the unbelief and sin by which he was surrounded. His exclamations of distress because of men's perversity and incredulity have been recorded by his faithful biographers. Matt. 17:17. But it is observable that no rebellious feeling ever arose in his breast or found utterance from his lips. Submission to the Father's appointments—this was the attitude he maintained all through his ministry. Matt. 4:10; 16:22, 23. And when that ministry drew to its close in a manner which called for the utmost fortitude, patience, and resignation, then his submission found utterance in the sublime and pathetic cry, "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matt. 26:37-42.

It must not be supposed that the Son of Man was insensible to suffering. But though sensitive to suffering, he was not overwhelmed by it; on the contrary, when trials and afflictions were most formidable Jesus was most self-possessed. Thus, when arrested in the garden he secured the safety of his disciples. John 18:1-9. When before the Jewish council, presided over by Annas, father-in-law of the high priest, he maintained an attitude of calm even amid insults and blows. John 18:19-23. And when at the bar of Pilate, the

Roman governor, his dignity of demeanor and of language was such that the judge was troubled in the presence of the accused. His independence and authority made so deep an impression upon the governor that he made several efforts to release the guiltless prisoner. John 19:9-16. Even when on his way to the place of punishment Jesus thought more of others than himself. "Weep not for me," he said to the tender-hearted women among the spectators, "but weep for yourselves and for your children." Luke 23:28, 31. We cannot but remark in him a habitual disposition of perfect submission to the will of his Father. In the midst of unequalled sorrows he remained master of his heart, his thoughts, his words.

Jesus throughout his ministry displayed a singular zeal for the glory of God, a zeal which was manifested by acts of remarkable boldness, such, for instance, as the authoritative cleansing of the temple at Jerusalem. There is moral majesty in the picture which the evangelists present of the Son of Man expelling the covetous traders from his Father's house. John 2:16; Matt. 21:12, 13. But zealous as Christ was, never did his zeal degenerate into fanaticism. On the contrary, he most carefully avoided any actions which might tend to cut short his career of service by betraying him into the hands of his foes before the time

arrived appointed by divine Wisdom for his offering up. During the first thirty years of his life Jesus remained in seclusion and silence. Even after his baptism he withdrew for forty days into the solitude of the wilderness. Matt. 4:1, 2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:1, 2. So prolonged and serious was the preparation through which our Lord passed with a view to his public ministry.

The wisdom of the Lord Jesus was manifest in every step he took in fulfilling his public ministry. After a short period of public teaching in Galilee, John 1:43; 2:11, 12, he repaired to Jerusalem, where he became known as a religious reformer. John 2:18-20. But, meeting with opposition, he withdrew into retirement in a rural part of Judæa, where his unobtrusive but divinely-effective ministry secured him many disciples. John 3:22. It was when the enmity and ill-will of the Pharisees, John 4:1, 2, were excited by his success that he judged it prudent to betake himself to Galilee, and to make that province, remote as it was from the leaders of the Jewish state, the chief scene of his holy and beneficent labors. John 4:3, 43-46, 54.

Even in the comparative seclusion of Galilee Jesus avoided as far as possible publicity and fame, Matt. 8:4, and this to such an extent as to excite questionings and misgivings in the mind

of John the Baptist, who appears to have expected from the Messiah a more open display of power. Matt. 11:2-6. On one occasion when the enthusiasm of the multitude was stirred up because of his wonderful works, and when they would fain have made him king, Jesus at once checked the manifestation by withdrawing from his admirers and retiring to the mountain solitudes. John 6:14, 15. He even forbade his disciples as yet to tell any one that he was Christ, lest the excitement of the people should be renewed. Matt. 16:20; Mark 8:30; Luke 9:21. A remarkable instance of the wisdom of Jesus is recorded by the evangelist John, who tells us that upon the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles the brethren of Jesus were very anxious that he should go up to the metropolis and before the assembled thousands declare himself to be the Messiah, but who records also that Jesus declined to accede to their request, since he knew that his hour was not yet come. John 7:6-8. When, however, his time approached he acted otherwise. The enthusiasm of the Galileans seems to have cooled when they found that he was not likely to realize their hopes of a political Messiah. John 6:66. Jesus went up to Jerusalem and there fulfilled his latest, most solemn, and most powerful ministry. He still evaded the malicious efforts of his foes to en-

trap and capture him. Matt. 19:3-9; 22:15-46. And it was only when his active ministry was all but finished, and when the period of humiliation and suffering was felt by him to be at hand, that Jesus publicly accepted the homage of the people, and in the triumphal entry consented to receive the honors and the designations which were his rightful due. John 12:12-19.

The wisdom and discretion of Jesus are apparent in the manner in which he dealt with the different classes of persons with whom he came into contact, and especially in the manner in which he adapted his instructions to the varying character and needs of his hearers. His insight penetrated every mind, and he knew well by what means to subdue the souls of men and bring them into the spiritual kingdom of God. He ever attacked with boldness the pride, the illusions, the worldly attachments which he detected in those with whom he conversed. What illustrations of this marvellous insight and fidelity have we in Christ's recorded conversations with Nicodemus, John 3:3, and again with the rich young ruler who aspired to the eternal life! Matt. 19:21. He could speak faithfully, almost sternly; as, for example, when he commanded that the dead should be left to bury their dead, Luke 9:60; but he could speak also with condescension and gen-

tleness to those who needed instruction and encouragement. The interview with the woman of Samaria is a marvellous instance of the way in which Jesus would deal with an intelligent and candid but, at the same time, ignorant and sinful nature. John 4:1-30. No wonder that she was prompted to inquire, "Is not this the Christ?"

Jesus has been termed "The great Teacher," and however inadequate such a designation may be, its justice is unquestionable. Original, striking, and varied were the forms in which he presented truth to the minds of men. Sometimes he expanded his thoughts in eloquent discourses, as in the Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5-7. Sometimes he condensed his thoughts into terse and even paradoxical sentences. Matt. 6:24; 19:24, 30; 22:14. Sometimes his teaching took the shape of an enigma, Matt. 13:12; 24:28; Luke 6:33-36; John 3:14; more often that of a parable. Matt. 13:1-50; 22:1-14; 25; Luke 10:30-37; 15; John 10:1-5. He drew his illustrations from the scenes of nature, Matt. 6:25-32; 13:1-9; Luke 12:54-57; John 4:35-38; from the incidents of daily life, Matt. 9:14-17; 11:16-19; 20:1-16; Mark 1:17; from the records of the Old Testament, Matt. 12:3-5; Luke 4:24-30; John 6:26-58. He so expressed his divine thoughts that

they could not be forgotten; and as a matter of fact many of these precious utterances have been put upon record by his disciples and have enriched all subsequent generations with their priceless spiritual wealth.

The discreetness and circumspection of the Lord Jesus were signally manifested in the manner in which he eluded the snares which were laid for him by his crafty foes. In answering the captious questions by which they sought to entrap him he always found an opportunity of bringing into prominence some great and fruitful truth. Thus when they sought either to imperil his influence over the Jews or to bring him into disfavor with the Roman authorities, by their famous question as to the lawfulness of paying tribute, Jesus not only avoided the snare, but in his reply laid down a great practical principle for the guidance of his followers in all time. Matt. 22:15-22. And when the Sadducees plied him with their foolish question concerning the woman who married seven brothers in succession, and thus endeavored to discredit the doctrine of the resurrection, Jesus answered them in language which is enshrined in the heart of Christendom: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." Luke 20:34-38.

There was no weakness in the wise and care-

ful circumspection of the Lord Jesus. He never yielded to the impulse of the prejudices or passions which in his circumstances would have mastered others. Nor did he ever yield to timidity. His fearlessness was evident in his return to Judæa upon receiving tidings of Lazarus' illness. He knew the danger involved in visiting Bethany; but this did not deter him from carrying out his purposes of mercy. John 11:6-10. The question with him was not, Is the path difficult or perilous? but, Is it the path of duty, the path of obedience to God?

With the wisdom of the serpent Jesus would have his disciples conjoin the harmlessness and simplicity of the dove. Matt. 10:16. On many occasions he commended—what he ever exemplified—transparency and truthfulness of character and speech. Matt. 5:37; 11:25; Luke 18:17. When he himself endured pain and grief, he did not dissimulate. John 11:33-35; 12:27; 13:21. Even in the agony of Gethsemane Jesus sought with beautiful frankness the solace of his disciples' sympathy. Matt. 26:38. There was in him no affectation; what he was, that he appeared to be.

Discreet as was Christ's conduct, he acted with a vigorous sincerity. Wherever he saw sin he stigmatized and rebuked it with inexorable

frankness; nor did he shrink from threatening hardened and impenitent sinners with the doom of "outer darkness." Matt. 7:13; 8:12; 22:13; 25:30. Hypocrisy was, of all sins, that which Jesus most hated; never has stronger, more trenchant language come from human lips than the language in which he denounced the hollow formality, the unspiritual ceremonialism, of the Scribes and Pharisees of his day, Matt. 23:23-28, and most faithful and earnest were his warnings against a religion consisting in words and in attitudes and lacking in sincerity and genuine godliness. Matt. 6:1-6, 16-18.

With severity in condemning sin Jesus conjoined the tenderest charity for men. While he opposed himself to moral evil in every form, he did this out of pity for the sinful race whose nature he had deigned to assume. The love which was preëminent in the Son of Man thrills even in some of the severest of his words. How marvelously is this combination apparent in the language in which Jesus mourned over the sin, the impenitence, and the approaching doom of the highly-favored but unfaithful city which was on the point of rejecting him! "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a

hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. 23:37, 38; Luke 13:34, 35.

In fact, Jesus loved all mankind, and he not only loved the race, he loved every particular human being. He cared for little children, and even identified himself with them; to receive a little child in his name was to receive himself. Matt. 18:5. When he folded the babes in his arms he took occasion to enjoin upon all men childlikeness of character as the indispensable condition of entrance into his spiritual kingdom. Luke 18:16, 17. The poor were objects of his gracious notice and affection. The touching incident of "the widow's mite" illustrates his consideration for the lowly and indigent. Luke 21:3, 4. The afflicted, the humble, the oppressed were regarded by Jesus with peculiar kindness and commiseration. Matt. 15:21-28; John 4:47-50; 9:6, 7. Nor did he disclaim the sinful, the debased, the despised; such, when they evinced contrition and true penitence, were welcomed to his society and heard from his gracious lips words of forgiveness and of encouragement. "I," said the divine Physician of souls, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Matt. 9:12, 13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31, 32. In accordance with his language was his conduct. When he pardoned the sinful woman who came

to him as he sat at meat in the house of Simon, Luke 7:36-50; when he became the guest of Zacchæus, the chief of the publicans, Luke 19:4-10; on such occasions he proved his compassion for these whom religious formalists were too ready to despise. And yet at the very time that he showed mercy to the sinner Jesus censured and condemned the sin. No more notable case of this kind is recorded than that of the woman taken in adultery, to whom the holy Saviour addressed those memorable words: "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." John 8:6-11.

While he laid stress upon the religion of the heart and upon the great duties of morality, our Lord treated with contempt those rigid precepts, those ceremonial requirements, which were too often in his time, as indeed in all times, substituted for genuine piety and goodness. Matt. 23:13; Mark 7:15, 21-23. The Jewish restrictions which had gathered round the Sabbath were shown by him to be inconsistent with the true spirit of the Fourth Commandment, and accordingly with that Christian liberty which Jesus instituted in his church. Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5. He pitied those who were taught by the Pharisees to aim at working out a religious position, a meritorious righteousness, by

laborious efforts to attain a standard of ritual, ceremonial perfection, and he compassionately invited all such to take in preference his mild yoke and to bear his easy burden, that so doing they might find rest unto their souls. Matt. 11:28-30.

Towards the chosen twelve Jesus cherished feelings of warm friendship, which were not chilled by their many errors and imperfections. He even on a very solemn occasion washed their feet in order to impart to them more effectively than by words the supreme lesson of humility. John 13:1-17. His tender heart was pained by the thought that one of his own companions and disciples would betray him to his foes. John 6:71; 13:21. We are able to judge of his feelings towards the twelve from his last quiet, consolatory, and encouraging discourse, which has been recorded by John with unusual fulness, and which gives us a delightful insight into the sympathy and kindness which possessed the Master's soul and animated his intercourse with his beloved ones. John 15:12-15. And his High Priestly prayer proves how deep was his concern for the true welfare of these chosen few, for their preservation and their moral perfection. John 17.

Such a review as that now taken of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth leads to

the conclusion that *in him the moral ideal of humanity was realized*. As far as the records enable us to judge, we must pronounce him the perfect man: perfect in purity, in wisdom, in moral energy, in sympathy, benevolence, and love to man.

But an objection may be urged which deserves our consideration. The Gospels—say the unbelievers—do not relate all that passed in the inmost heart of Jesus; and we have no right to presume that throughout his life Jesus was free from every taint and stain of sin. This specious objection, however, admits of a conclusive answer.

All that we know of Jesus, of his upright character, his perfect insight, constrains us to believe that he knew himself, that he is a credible witness to his own moral standing. Now Jesus of Nazareth deemed himself absolutely free from sin.

While all other servants of God, before and after Christ, have without exception humbled themselves before God on account of their transgressions of the divine law, Psa. 51; Rom. 7:14-25; 1 Tim. 1:15; Jas. 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10, not one word is recorded to have escaped the lips of Jesus expressive of any consciousness of sin, of any regret for fault committed, for duty neglected.

He required repentance and conversion from others, but he felt no necessity on his own part for such experiences. Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:1-5. He continually warned his auditors—even his personal followers—of the possibility of final condemnation and rejection from the kingdom of God. Matt. 5:20; 10:28; 18:35. But so far was he from imagining the possibility of his own exclusion from that kingdom that he always represented himself as possessing the power of admission and of rejection. Concerning the fate of hypocrites he said, "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7:21-23.

Again and again in the Gospels recurs this contrast between sinful men and the sinless Son of Man. His disciples were taught to put up a daily prayer for pardon, Luke 11:4; he claimed for himself the right to forgive sins. Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24. He reminded his hearers of their sinfulness in God's sight, but affirmed that he did always those things that pleased God. John 8:29. "For righteousness' sake," and "For my sake," were with Christ equivalent and convertible expressions. Matt. 5:10, 11. He came to fulfil the law, which no sinful man had done or could do. Matt. 5:17. He claimed faultlessness in the sight of his Father: "I do

always the things that are pleasing to Him." John 8:29. He boldly appealed even to his enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" John 8:46. Who but Jesus could have taken a stand like this? He was indeed hated, but it was "without cause." John 15:25. In the interview with the rich young ruler Jesus implicitly accepted as his due the title by which he was addressed—though with an insufficient understanding of its import—when he was called "Good Master." Mark 10:18. Could he have claimed, as he did, the first place in his disciples' hearts, had he not been conscious of that perfect sinlessness which alone could give him a just right to a position quite unique?

But Jesus actually and explicitly asserted his moral perfection, and presented himself to his disciples as the faultless model for their imitation. Who but Jesus could have ventured to address to others language such as this: "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." John 15:10.

Jesus always taught his disciples that it would be enough for them to resemble their Master, Matt. 10:25; John 13:16; teaching which implied the perfection of his character and life. He placed perfection in moral similarity to the Fa-

ther, Matt. 5:48; and this perfection he claimed himself to have attained.

Now no reasonable person will maintain that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, who, knowing himself to be faulty and imperfect, deliberately deceived his disciples by representing himself to be without sin. And it is as incredible that he should himself have been under an illusion as to his own moral excellence.

It is impossible that the wisest of beings, the Light of all ages, should be so mistaken regarding himself; that Jesus should have had perfect intelligence of moral truth, and should yet have deceived himself as to his own character; that he should have, like ourselves, carried evil with him in his heart, and yet should never have discerned it, and should have formed a judgment of himself entirely false and unjust.

Certainly we do not know all that passed in the mind of the Lord Jesus; this is not possible to us. But this we do know, that he was perfectly aware of his own moral character and life, and that we are justified in believing his declaration that he was free from sin and perfect in holiness, that no sin ever soiled his heart, and that he alone, in the midst of our fallen humanity, was the one normal, ideal, and perfect man. John 6:68, 69; John 7:18.

II.

JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

WE have hitherto been considering the human side of Jesus' character and life. He was the sinless Son of Man. We have now to show that between Jesus and God there existed a relation altogether unique.

When a boy of twelve years old Jesus used most remarkable language in explaining to his parents his detention in the temple at Jerusalem: "Wist ye not that I must be about MY FATHER'S business?" Luke 2 : 49. This language anticipated that of his future ministry; it was as his Father that Jesus ever spoke of God. Matt. 7 : 21; 12 : 50; 18 : 35; 26 : 53; John 2 : 16; 5 : 17; 10 : 29. On many occasions, as we learn from the record of the New Testament, he expressed his consciousness of the most intimate relation with the Eternal. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "What things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." "The Father loveth the Son." John 5 : 17, 19, 20. Such passages are sufficient evidence of the terms upon which Jesus conceived himself to stand towards the Father. When Simon Peter acknowledged him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living

God," Matt. 16: 13-17, his confession was accepted and approved. And before Caiaphas Jesus made no secret of his unique relation to the Lord of all. Matt. 26: 62-64.

We meet, not only in John's Gospel, but in the other Gospels also, with proofs of our Lord's assumption of divine dignity. Thus Matthew and Luke have recorded this sublime and conclusive utterance which came from Jesus' lips: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father: neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." Matt. 11: 25-27; Luke 10: 21, 22. There was a holy familiarity in the manner in which Jesus spoke of God which was becoming in him, but which would not have been becoming in any other. These are instances: "I and my Father are one," John 10: 30; "The Father is greater than I," John 14: 28; "If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." John 14: 23. It was such expressions as these which suggested the profound remark of Pascal, "that Jesus spoke so simply of the greatest things, and even of divine things, that we feel that he must have been familiar and at home with them."

It must further be observed that this filial relation towards God, of which Jesus was conscious, did not begin in this earthly life. Again and again he affirmed that heaven was his proper and native country. John 3 : 13; 6 : 33, 50, 51. He knew whence he came and whither he went. John 8 : 14. 'There was One who had sent him whom the Jews knew not. John 7 : 28, 29. 'The Father had sanctified him and had sent him into the world. John 10 : 36. He came from the Father, and to the Father he returned. John 16 : 28. In reply to some who were offended with him for saying that he was "the bread which came down from heaven," Jesus asked them, "What if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where he was before?" John 6 : 62.

In the conversation with the Jews recorded by John in the eighth chapter of his Gospel our Lord claimed the very highest dignity and power. He promised those who kept his word that they should never see death. He declared that the Father glorified him. He astonished and enraged his hearers by assuring them, "Before Abraham was, I am." John 8 : 51-58. Such language was a direct affirmation of his preëxistence, and it harmonizes with the language he subsequently employed in his intercessory prayer: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with

the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17:4, 5. "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John 17:24. Thus, even while Jesus assumed the form of a servant, there shone through his lowly guise some glimpses of his native majesty.

This divine glory was apparent not only in the words he uttered, but in the many and various miracles, the record of which occupies so many of the pages of the four Gospels. When he stilled the storm upon the Lake of Gennesaret such was the impression made by this exhibition of authority, even upon the twelve who knew him well, that they exclaimed in astonishment, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Matt. 8:27. But if the impression produced by this miracle is recorded, we cannot doubt that a similar impression was produced by other instances of the exercise of supernatural power by the Prophet of Nazareth. When the people saw him feed thousands with a few loaves of bread, John 6:1-13; when they witnessed the healing of various diseases and infirmities, Matt. 4:23; 8:1-4; 9:35; Luke 17:11-19; John 5:1-16, etc., and especially the cure of demoniacs, Mark 1:23-28; 5:1-20; when lepers were cleansed, and paralytics restored to the use of their bodily powers, how could they avoid the

conclusion that marvellous power was intrusted to this beneficent Teacher and Physician! Jesus raised from the funeral bier the son of a widow of Nain: what was the effect produced by the miracle? "Fear took hold on all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us, and God hath visited his people." Luke 7:13-16. A similar conviction was wrought by the miraculous raising from the bed of death of the youthful daughter of the ruler Jairus. Mark 5:37-43. But of all Christ's miracles the most stupendous in itself, and the most powerful in the impression it produced both upon friends and foes, was the resurrection of Lazarus of Bethany. John 11:33-44. This sign was expressly wrought in order that the people might see the glory of God and might know that the Father ever heard him, and indeed that the Father had sent him into the world.

In fact, all the miracles related in the Gospels are so many revelations of the glory of the Son of Man and so many evidences of a greatness unique and truly divine. John 2:11. Jesus himself was accustomed to appeal to his miracles as evidences of his divinity. It was to these he pointed when the messengers of the forerunner came to him with the question, "Art thou He that should come?" Matt. 11:2-6. It was for their disregard of these that he so severely denounced the unbelief of the

inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida. Matt. 11:21-24. It was upon these that, in controversy with the unbelieving Jews, he staked his claims: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." John 10:37, 38. And at the very close of his ministry Jesus gave final judgment against those who rejected him, saying, "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." John 15:23-25.

As the works of the Son of Man are the manifestation of a divine power, so his *word* is the very Word of God. The people listening to his discourses felt that "he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Matt. 7:28, 29. The officers sent to apprehend him acknowledged that "never man spake like this man." John 7:46. He himself was conscious that his words were imperishable. "Heaven and earth," said he, "shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Matt. 24:35. He knew that his word was indestructible seed which should from age to age produce a spiritual harvest to the praise of God. Matt. 13:1-23.

In fact, the word of the lowly carpenter of Nazareth had virtue to deliver man from the worst ills to which he was subject—from error,

sin, and death. To receive that word in reverent faith was and is to attain spiritual liberty and eternal life. John 5:24, 25; 8:51.

Christ was the revelation of the Father to mankind. His judgment, he himself declared, was the Father's judgment, John 8:16; his will was the Father's will, John 5:50. The compassion of the Son of Man, his holy love, his pity towards the penitent, his condescension towards the young, his anxiety for the welfare and salvation of all—this is the same love as that of the Father in heaven, whose desire it is that not one of his offspring should perish. Matt. 18:14. In the Son of Man are revealed the Father's wisdom and holiness, power and charity. He who has seen the Son has seen the Father. John 14:9.

Christ is the living revelation of God. His person is the centre of the religious life of men—the object of their faith. He ever represented himself as the authoritative bestower of the highest blessings: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." John 14:1. "*I will give you rest.*" Matt. 11:28. To love the Son of Man is to love God; to hate him is to hate God. John 15:23. To give one's self to him is to give one's self to God, John 17:10; to hold fellowship with him is to hold fellowship with God, John 17:23; to dwell in him is to dwell in God. John 14:23. The Son

of Man is God become man; is, as Vinet says, "the God whom one sees and loves;" is, as Pascal declares, "the God whose knees one can embrace!"

It is not incredible that our Father in heaven should manifest himself to us in the person of his Son. But it is incredible that a being so morally unique as Jesus, a being who has been and is the source of the highest spiritual blessings to mankind, should have lived and died under an illusion as to his relation to the Heavenly Father, that he should have been in error in claiming to be the very Son of God. We reason from his faultless, glorious character to the validity of his own witness to himself, to his proper deity. The Son of Man he was, meek and lowly in heart; but he was also what from the beginning to the end of his ministry on earth he consistently claimed to be and proved himself to be, THE SON OF GOD!

III.

JESUS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

JESUS, the Son of Man, was undoubtedly the Messiah foretold by the Hebrew prophets. But his mission was far grander and loftier than any local or national office could involve. He himself spoke of other sheep than those of the fold of

Israel whom he destined to form the one flock under his care, for he was the divine Shepherd of mankind. John 10:16. His life, his miracles, his teaching, his obedience to the Father's will, his conflict with the world's sin—all converged towards one and the same end, THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND. And that which rendered him the Saviour was *the giving up of his life as a ransom for many*.

From the very commencement of his ministry, as we learn from the recorded conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus contemplated its tragical end. He foretold that he should be "lifted up from the earth." John 3:14, 15. And as the time drew near he gave his disciples to understand that he should "suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests and scribes," that he should be put to death with violence, and that he should rise again on the third day. Matt. 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; 26:2. The prospect was one which troubled his sensitive spirit; he looked forward to an overwhelming baptism of suffering. Luke 12:50. Yet he regarded his approaching anguish as appointed by divine wisdom and as foretold in Old Testament Scripture. He was the grain of wheat which must die in order to bring forth much fruit, John 12:24; his flesh was the bread which he would give for the life of the world. John

6:51-53. On the eve of his passion, when instituting the Memorial Supper, he spoke of his blood as "My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins." Matt. 26:26-28.

In the mortal sufferings of the Lord Jesus there was something more than appeared upon the surface. While many of Christ's courageous followers have died the martyr's death with cheerfulness and even with gladness, it is observable that his was no triumphant end. His death was preceded by unutterable agony of spirit. Although he had always expressed his conviction that the Father would not leave him to himself, John 8:16, 29, in "the hour of the power of darkness," Luke 22:53, he felt himself forsaken by his Heavenly Father, Matt. 27:46. Deep was the humiliation into which he descended for our sake, and bitter was the cup of woe he deigned to drink for us!

The explanation of Christ's anguish is to be found in the consideration that it had reference to the inviolable moral law of the great Ruler of the universe. The righteous Governor could not suffer his law to be defied and contemned; he could not absolve the guilty race of men without exhibiting the authority and majesty of the law connecting punishment with sin. Jesus, the only innocent member of our race, submitting to unmerited sufferings and death, made a reparation

for human sin. Thus every guilty soul that repents, confides in the Redeemer, and takes advantage of the propitiation he has offered, is assured by the gospel of obtaining in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake the pardon of his transgressions, salvation, and eternal life. Matt. 26:28; 20:28; John 3:14, 15. Christ's death was a willing sacrifice, an act of cheerful obedience towards his Father, of ready devotion for the salvation of his brothers of mankind; he "tasted death for every man." He might have avoided death, but as the Good Shepherd he chose to give his life for the sheep. John 10:14, 15.

In reading the narrative of our Lord's passion as given by the evangelists we are constrained to regard it, not as the defeat of one vanquished by the might of His adversaries, but as the consummation of the career of humiliation voluntarily accepted by the Saviour of mankind. In the midst of his ignominy, his holiness and his divinity shone forth with all the more majestic splendor. Witness the several incidents recorded by those who witnessed the awful scene on Calvary: his prayer for his executioners, Luke 23:34; his commendation of his mother to the care of John, John 19:25-27; his gracious promise of salvation to the dying malefactor, Luke 23:43. Even to his last breath he retained his self-possession and

displayed his patience, his filial solicitude, his compassion, his divine majesty. And when he had yielded his spirit unto his Father's hands, his demeanor, taken in connection with the earthquake, the darkness, and all the accompanying circumstances, elicited from the Roman centurion the exclamation, "Surely this was a righteous man!" Luke 23:47. "Truly this was the Son of God!" Matt. 27:54.

The narrative of Christ's earthly manifestation does not, however, end with his death. When during his ministry he spoke of his approaching decease, he professed his intention of taking again the life he was about to lay down. John 10:17, 18. Accordingly we find the evangelists relate that on the third day after his death Jesus showed himself, risen and living, to his disciples, and that he offered most indisputable proofs of the reality of his resurrection, showing them his wounds, Luke 24:39; John 20:20, and bidding them handle him, eating, Luke 24:41-43, and conversing with them, and displaying for their benefit his miraculous power over nature, John 21:1-14.

The words of the risen Jesus have in no respect the character of apocryphal, invented sayings. They are all worthy of the divine Speaker. Such

is the case with the message he sent by Mary to his brethren, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," John 20:17; with the authoritative language in which he conferred the gift of the Spirit upon his assembled disciples, John 20:22, 23; with the appeal and the subsequent declaration upon the occasion of the interview with Thomas, John 20:26-29; with the instructions delivered to the apostles with reference to their evangelistic mission to their fellow-men, Matt. 28:18-20. Nothing is more decisive upon this point than the record of the conversation which took place between the risen Lord and Simon Peter. John 21:15-23. The faithfulness and tenderness breathing throughout the recorded words of the Saviour are conclusive evidence that they were *his* words in whose heart was no indifference to sin, but also no harshness towards the repentant sinner. In fact such an interview as that related by John in the twenty-first chapter of his Gospel could not possibly have been invented.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the confirmation of his own witness to himself. It is the seal placed by the hand of the Almighty God upon the person and work of Jesus to assure us that, in the transaction of Calvary, sin and death, those two tyrants of our afflicted humanity, were conquered by Jesus Christ, and that he who has

obtained this victory is—not only in virtue of his dignity as Son of God, but also as the great Redeemer—the sovereign Shepherd and the glorious, gracious King of man.

Withdrawn from human sight Jesus lives in heavenly places. At the right hand of God, Mark 16:19, he pleads with his Father for mankind, and reveals himself in a manner altogether invisible and spiritual, but yet real and effective, to all who trust in him and love him.

On the eve of his death Jesus promised the great gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, John 14:16-19; 16:7, 13-16, and this promise he has through the long ages that have since elapsed been fulfilling for the benefit of all his disciples, conferring thus upon them the blessings of truth and holiness, guidance, peace, and consolation. He foretold that men should witness the signs of his spiritual power in the establishment of his kingdom both in the heart of individuals and in the bosom of human society. His prediction is still in course of fulfilment. The church of the Redeemer grows like a tree, mighty and spreading. Matt. 13:31, 32. The circle which includes the believing and obedient is constantly widening as the gospel is preached in the most distant lands. Matt. 24:14.

When the purpose of divine wisdom is accom-

plished, then the end shall come. The Son of man shall appear in his glory, the dead shall be raised, the righteous shall be separated from the wicked. And while the workers of iniquity shall be rejected, the elect shall be gathered into the heavenly kingdom, Matt. 13:43; 25:31-46; John 5:28, 29, and, freed for ever from sin, from sorrow, and from death, shall enter into the full enjoyment of all that their Lord has promised—shall share in the beatific and eternal vision of their God!

In picturing the moral lineaments of Jesus we have combined the representations given by those who are called the Synoptic Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with the very distinct and yet perfectly consistent and harmonious representation of the fourth Gospel. We have recognized, in the several delineations of the evangelists, ONE DIVINE ORIGINAL, a being who was conscious of possessing perfect holiness and divine dignity, and of having come to earth, commissioned by his Father, to achieve the redemption of mankind. We have seen Christ's own declarations blend into a single testimony in favor of the divinity of the Son of Man, in whom the weary and the heavy-laden recognize the Saviour whom they seek—a Saviour who, though belonging to humanity, is yet infinitely above humanity, so that, without

being guilty of idolatry, we can base our faith upon him and to him yield our heart.

That there are divergences in detail between the first three Gospels and that of John is admitted. The aim of the Synoptists was to preserve the primitive accounts received by Christians as to the facts of our Saviour's ministry, Luke 1:1-4; the aim of John was to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was none other than the divine Word taking upon him the nature and living the life of man. John 1:1-18. The four evangelists have concurred in bringing before our minds THE ONE CHRIST, with the witness he himself bore to his absolute moral perfection, his divine dignity, his redemptive mission. These historians have preserved for our benefit the testimony of Jesus to his own nature, character, and work. They have not "invented" Jesus Christ, but they have permitted us to hear his discourses, to witness his mighty works, to follow him to his cross, to behold his glory.

Jesus Christ really was what he professed to be. His witness to himself is the perfect truth—a rock upon which those who would have certainty and safety may confidently build. 1 Cor. 3:11.

To be happy in the midst of this life—filled as it is with sorrows—it is necessary to know Christ,

not as we know a stranger who passes through the street, but as we know our most intimate and beloved friend; in a word, we must love Christ.

And when the hour comes for us to quit this earth, in order that we may go in peace we must believe in this blessed Son of God, who said to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." John 11 : 25, 26.

FERDINAND CHRISTIAN BAUR

AND

HIS THEORY

OF

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY

AND OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS.

BY

REV. A. B. BRUCE, D. D.

ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

It is pointed out that Baur exercises influence over the English-speaking public through translations of his works, through the work entitled "Supernatural Religion" and through the study of the Hegelian philosophy in the universities.

A few biographical particulars concerning Baur are supplied.

The influence of Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Strauss, on the formation of his later views concerning Christianity, is briefly adverted to.

Then follows the exposition of these views, forming what is known as the Tübingen theory as to the origin of Christianity and the New Testament writings.

The theory is next criticised, the chief positions being these: The theory is based on the two philosophical assumptions that the miraculous is impossible, and that all historical movements proceed, according to the Hegelian law of development, by antagonism. The alleged antagonism between Paul and the original apostles has no real foundation in the New Testament; the criticism of New Testament books associated with this theory does not stand the test of impartial investigation; the theological tendencies ascribed to the writers of these books are, for the most part, imaginary.

Then follows a summary of these criticisms, and a reference to the good incidentally resulting from the promulgation of the theory.

The tract concludes with a brief statement as to the nature of the gospel and the harmony of the New Testament writings.

FERDINAND CHRISTIAN BAUR

AND HIS THEORY.

It is now nearly half a century since the famous Tübingen theory as to the origin of Christianity and of the New Testament writings was propounded by the learned and able German theologian above named. The school of criticism founded by Dr. Baur is decadent or nearly dead in Germany, and many of the most characteristic positions of the founder have been conclusively refuted and abandoned even by his own disciples. But the movement he originated, though pretty well spent in his native country, has still vitality here, where it is of much more recent date; for it takes Continental waves of thought well nigh a generation to reach our shores. The English-speaking public have been made more generally acquainted with Dr. Baur and his views within the last twelve or fifteen years by translations of some of his works, and by the anonymous publi-

cation entitled "Supernatural Religion," the commercial success of which—for it has passed through several editions—may be regarded as an index of the eager interest taken by a large public in such skeptical literature. Another fact which has to be taken into account is the present popularity, at least in certain centres of learning, of the Hegelian philosophy.* As long as Hegel is in vogue, Baur will be in favor; for, as we shall see, Baur's theory is simply Hegelianism as understood by him applied to the fundamental problems of the Christian faith. It remains to add that Baur's

* It is not easy to indicate in a few words the character of this philosophy, about the significance of which even its adherents are much divided in opinion. It may, however, be described as an idealistic Pantheism. It differs from the system of Spinoza chiefly in two respects. First, in its conception of God; while in the Spinozan system the absolute being is conceived of as *substance*, in the Hegelian it is conceived of as *spirit*. Second, in the view taken of the connection between God, the world of nature, and man. In Spinoza's theory God is endowed with the attributes both of matter and of mind, and the phenomena of the material and spiritual universe are thought of as two parallel streams of being corresponding to each other, but not casually connected. In Hegel's theory God, nature, and man are thought of as a series or circle. God objectifies himself in nature and rises out of nature, returns to himself and becomes conscious of himself in man. This is the great process of the universe, and it answers to the process of the human mind in thought, which moves in a perpetual rhythm of affirmation, negation, and synthesis of opposites. This rhythmical movement is the law at once of logic, of history, and of the universe at large. The universe is a great movement of thought. We shall see further on the use made by Baur of this law in explaining the origin of Christianity.

influence is traceable even in quarters where it is strenuously resisted. Believing theologians in all parts of Europe have to notice him, however widely they differ from him. No one affects to ignore him.

We cannot, therefore, regard ourselves as undertaking an idle task when we endeavor to expound and criticise, in a simple popular manner, a theory which makes Christianity a thing of purely natural origin, calls in question the authenticity of all but a few of the New Testament books, and makes the whole collection contain, not a harmonious system of divine truth, but a confused mass of merely human and contradictory opinions as to the nature of the Christian religion.

It may increase the interest and gratify the natural curiosity of some of our readers if we preface our exposition and criticism with

A FEW BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS.

Ferdinand Christian Baur was born in 1729 in a village called Schmieden, near Stuttgart; but after his eighth year his boyhood was passed in a small town at the southern base of the Swabian Alps called Blaubeuren, a few miles distant from Ulm. His father was a clergyman, and exercised his sacred office in both places successively in a diligent, conscientious manner, adding to his other

duties the instruction of his son till his fourteenth year. At that age the boy went to school to the seminary of the place, called the Cloisters, proceeding to Tübingen in 1809. Both at school and at the university he developed a decided taste and talent for classical and philosophical studies. On leaving the university in 1814 he acted for a year or two as an assistant preacher in a rural parish. On the death of his father in 1817 he was appointed to a professorship in the seminary in Blaubeuren, where he very soon made his mark as a teacher, and counted among his pupils some youths who afterwards became famous, one being D. F. Strauss, author of "The Mythical Theory of the Life of Jesus." In 1826 Bauer was appointed to the vacant chair of historical theology in Tübingen, which he filled till his death in 1860.

Baur was a hard student, exceptionally so even in Germany. After his appointment to the chair in Tübingen his habit was to rise, summer and winter, at four o'clock in the morning, working in winter for some hours without a fire, out of consideration for the domestics, though the cold was occasionally so severe that the ink was frozen! He worked at this rate from early morn till bedtime, with only the necessary interruptions for public duties, meals, and exercise, to make

himself master of the subjects which he had to teach; in which, being a shy, modest, scrupulously conscientious man, he deemed himself so deficient at the time of his appointment that he felt inclined to refuse it. Whatever deficiencies he might be conscious of to begin with, it is easy to see that an able man with such extraordinary application was likely ere long to become a person of great learning, and, unless in this he was to be an exception among his countrymen, also a voluminous author. Baur was both in an eminent degree. His works exhibit immense learning as well as transcendent ability, and they are very numerous and on a great variety of subjects within the general limits of theology. In both respects he is one of the foremost figures in the whole history of German theological literature. However widely and seriously we dissent from his later views, with which his name is chiefly associated, it is only justice to pay this tribute at the outset to his fame as an author.*

HIS MASTERS.

“Later views” we have said, for Baur began his literary career very early, and his theological starting-point was very different from his goal.

* The foregoing biographical particulars are taken from Zeller's article on Baur in his “Vorträge und Abhandlungen,” 1865.

His first essay appeared in 1817 in a theological serial, and was orthodox and supernaturalistic in its attitude, after the tradition of the old Tübingen school. The founder of the new Tübingen school passed from supernaturalism to thoroughgoing naturalism very gradually, and the process by which his ultimate scheme of thought was worked out in his mind has a long history. Among the influences to which the charge is to be attributed a very prominent place is due to Schleiermacher, whose "Glaubenslehre," first published in 1821, Baur studied with the receptive enthusiasm of youth during the Blaubeuren period of his professional career. Schleiermacher has sent his disciples in very different directions; some upward towards a fuller faith than his own, some downward into the depths of theological negation. The impulse communicated to Baur was downward. The tendency and effect of Schleiermacher's exposition of the Christian faith are to reduce the supernatural to a minimum and to make the little that remains appear as natural as possible, and so to satisfy the claims of science and philosophy [as their claims are conceived of from a skeptical or semi-skeptical standpoint], while endeavoring to do justice to the sentiments of believers. Christianity appears simply as one, though the best, of the forms which the religious

consciousness has assumed in the religious history of mankind: Christ as the ideal man, the consummation and crown of humanity, which was exhibited only in rude condition in the man of the first creation; and many doctrines previously deemed important are treated as of no essential moment. The disciple caught the spirit of the master and carried it out to consequences at which he stood aghast; treating, for example, the ideal humanity of Christ as a purely subjective notion, which had no foundation in the life of Jesus.*

Another of Baur's masters was Hegel. Hegel's influence came later, and may not have been so deep or decisive as Schleiermacher's, for it is the favorite authors of our early years that tell upon us most powerfully. But it is apparent to any one who reads the works in which Baur expounds his theory respecting the origin of Christianity, such as "The History of Christianity in the First Three Centuries,"† how completely the great philosopher's system had taken possession of his mind. The style is completely overlaid by the characteristic phrases of the Hegelian philosophy. Nor is Hegel's influence a matter affecting

* Vide Baur's work on Gnosticism, "Die Christliche Gnosis," pp. 626-668.

† This forms the first volume of his great work on the Christian Church.

merely the form of thought. From that philosopher Baur took the great law of *development by antagonism*, of which we shall have occasion to say more hereafter. We simply ask our readers to take preliminary note of the fact here.

Another of the men from whom Baur received a powerful impulse was one of his Blaubeuren pupils, Strauss. When Strauss' "*Leben Jesu*" appeared in 1835 Baur recognized at once its power and its defect. Its value for him lay in the completeness with which, as he thought, it demolished the traditional faith in the historical truth of the Gospel records, so clearing the way for critical inquiry into the genesis of these records. Its defect in his view was that it confined itself to criticism of the history and did not attempt criticism of the writings. This defect Baur set himself to supply, striving to show how the various Gospels arose and why it is that they cannot be trusted as sources of information concerning the life and teaching of Jesus.*

HIS THEORY EXPOUNDED.

In proceeding now to expound Baur's theory concerning these Gospels and the New Testament writings generally, and concerning the origin of

* His views on the Gospels are set forth in the work "*Die Kanonischen Evangelien*." 1847.

Christianity, we ask our readers to remember that we concern ourselves only with those works of our author which directly bear on these topics. We have further to explain that our aim is not to show the genesis of the theory in the author's mind, but to exhibit it as it finally took shape—a fully-developed and closely-connected system of thought; to exhibit it, not exhaustively, but in its main outlines.

According to this theory, then, the great outstanding fact regarding the Christianity of the apostolic age was a radical contrariety of view as to the nature and destination of the new religion, dividing the church into two parties, one of which, headed by the apostle Paul, held that the gospel was for the world and for all, Jew and Gentile, on equal terms; while the other, having all the original apostles, the companions of Jesus, on its side, made Christianity essentially Jewish by insisting on the perpetual obligation of the Jewish law. The one was the party of the *Paulinists* or Universalists; the other was the party of the *Judaists*. This controversy, in its origin, progress and termination, by compromise or reconciliation, covered the history of the church for a hundred years, from the time when Paul's principal epistles were written down to a date somewhat later than the middle of the second century. All the

writings of the New Testament, it is maintained, have reference to and spring out of the various stages of the controversy, and their approximate date can be determined by inspection of their contents, showing to which stage they must have belonged. Clear evidence, it is alleged, of the existence of this controversy can be discerned more or less in nearly all the books, but more especially in certain of their number. Before going into this, however, it may be well to go back to the fountain-head and consider the account given of the teaching of the Founder of the faith. We shall thus become acquainted with Dr. Baur's conception of the Christianity of Christ, and learn what, in his opinion, were the elements therein which laid the foundation for subsequent misunderstanding.

Christianity as taught by Jesus, according to Baur, was a purely natural product of certain influences which can be specified. He attempts the same task with reference to the origin of Christianity that Gibbon sought to accomplish with reference to its subsequent progress and triumph. And he gets rid of the supernatural in the same way as the great English historian, i. e., not by formal argument directed against the possibility or reality of the miraculous, but by the tacit assumption that there were no miracles to be ac-

counted for, and by an enumeration of natural causes which of themselves appear to him quite sufficient to account for the rise of the new religion. The author very distinctly indicates his attitude in the opening sentences of his work on "Christianity and the Christian Church of the First Three Centuries." He says:

"In no department of historical inquiry does all that relates to the contents of a definite series of historical phenomena depend so much on the initial point from which it starts as in the history of the Christian church; nowhere does so much depend as here on the conception we form of the point from which the whole historical course takes its beginning. The historian who comes to the task with the faith of the church stands at its threshold before the wonder of all wonders, before the original fact of Christianity—that the Son of God descended from the eternal throne of Godhead to this earth and became man in the womb of the Virgin. He who sees in this an absolute miracle puts himself thereby outside of all historical connection. A miracle is an absolute beginning, and the more this beginning conditions all that follows, the more must the whole series of the phenomena which belong to the subject of Christianity bear the same stamp. . . . Historical investigation has therefore very naturally an

interest in drawing even the miracle of the absolute beginning into the historical connection and resolving it as far as possible into its natural elements."

What, then, were these natural elements which together constituted the Christianity of Christ? Baur answers this question very explicitly. There were four elements for which, as he thinks, Christianity was indebted to the previous history of the world. These were its *universalistic spirit*, its *subjectivity* or *spirituality*, its *pure monotheism*, and its *ascetic ideal of life*. The first it got from Rome, the seat of a universal empire; the second from Greece, which had been taught by the Athenian sage that the first business of man was to know himself and to realize his importance as a moral subject; the third from the Hebrew Scriptures, as interpreted by the Alexandrian philosophy represented by Philo, whereby the Jewish idea of God was purged from particularism and adapted to the requirements of a universal religion; and the fourth from the Jewish anchorites, known by the name of the *Essenes*.

Christ's merit was to discern these essential features in the religious movements of the past, to appreciate their importance for the present, and to see in them the germs out of which might spring a great future. No less, but also no more.

Universality was in the air, and it only required a sympathetic, powerful mind to lay hold of it and introduce it into the sphere of religion and make it valid there. It was to be expected that some one would arise to become in religion the mouthpiece of the time-spirit, and from the nature of the case it was also to be expected that when the Man appeared he would not speak in vain, for the hour was propitious. Political Universalism preëxisting insured success for religious Universality adequately proclaimed.

So likewise with the second element, *spirituality*. "Know thyself," Socrates had said, and the word had gone sounding down the ages, audible to an ever-increasing number of men, awakening responsive echoes in the schools of philosophy, Stoics, Epicureans, Skeptics, and Eclectics vying with each other in the emphasis of their response, till at length the voice was caught up by the Sage of Galilee, and re-uttered in his own dialect with a power sufficient to create a new world founded on faith in the infinite importance of man as a moral personality—a faith which, making all turn on the spirit, was therefore fit to be the faith of all, the religion of humanity.

Not less indebted to the past, according to Dr. Baur, was Jesus even for his ideas of God and of human life. His Father-God, beautiful as the

conception is, was simply the God of Israel humanized by means of the philosophy of Philo. His severe maxims of conduct, prescribing a life of self-denial, and his beatitudes on poverty, emanated from the shores of the Dead Sea, where the Essene brotherhood spent their days in retirement from the world.

Such, according to the Tübingen theory, were the elements of the religious idea of Jesus, and such their supposed sources. But these by themselves would not have sufficed to make Jesus the power he became. In order to succeed he must avail himself of the *Messiah idea*, and offer himself to his countrymen as the fulfiller of Messianic hope. The Genius of the new religion happening to be a Jew, no other pathway to influence was open. The claim to be Messiah might not help him all at once to become a world-power, but it was indispensable in order to his gaining a footing among his own people, and that was the necessary first step towards universal empire. The Messianic idea in itself was but a dream, and Jesus to a certain extent was aware of the fact; nevertheless it could not be ignored, for the Jewish nation earnestly believed in it. Any man seeking to influence decisively the Jewish mind must recognize the Messianic hope as a fact and accommodate himself to it. If he aspired to be a su-

preme religious benefactor to the chosen race, he must even call himself the Messiah. In Judæa to say, "I bring to you the *summum bonum*," and to say, "I am the Messiah," were one and the same thing. In Baur's own words:

"Nothing of higher moment could happen on the soil of Jewish popular religious history which did not either connect itself with the Messiah idea or was not introduced by it. Thus was indicated to Christianity the way which it had to take."*

Observe now what we have got. Jesus on the one hand teaches a religion universalistic in spirit—for all mankind, not for Jews alone; on the other he claims to be the Jewish Messiah. Two things thus meet in him which may not be irreconcilable, but which wear a superficial aspect of antagonism that may easily give rise to contrariety of view and controversy. Some of those who espouse the new religion may emphasize the universality of Christ's teaching, and others may attach chief importance to his Messiahship, and hence may come conflict. For the ultimate fortunes of the new religion this may not be a calamity. On Hegelian principles, indeed, it may confidently be expected to be the reverse; for according to these all progress and development proceed by conflict. From this point of view it is

* "Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche," I. 37.

desirable that conflict as to the nature of Christianity should arise; the new movement will come to nothing unless it do arise. There need be no great fear on this score, as human beings generally do manage to get up controversies about matters in which they are deeply interested, especially in the sphere of religion. There may, however, be some difficulty in getting a worthy representative of the universalism of Christianity. The narrower view will look after itself, for the multitude incline to narrow ideas; but what if no effective advocate of a gospel for the world should appear?

Here is one possible difficulty in the way of getting Christianity started on its career. Another very serious one, coming in at an earlier stage, arises out of the death of Jesus. Must not that event be fatal to the cause? Yes, replies Dr. Baur, unless it can be got over somehow. It would effectually meet the difficulty if the dead one should rise again. That, however, from the Tübingen point of view, is impossible, and the next best thing is that the disciples should persuade themselves that their Master has risen, which is happily not impossible. Faith in the resurrection will serve the same purpose as the resurrection itself, give heart to the followers of Jesus to go forth as the apostles of the Christian religion.

What the eleven will preach may be guessed beforehand. They are all commonplace men, incapable of entering into the world-wide aims of their Lord. But where then are the representatives of Christian universality to come from? By the nature of the case they must be few, for they must be superior men, rising above the average level in genius, earnestness, and force, belonging to the aristocracy of humanity, the number of whom is always small. What if such rare men, capable of being mouthpieces of universality, should not be forthcoming? Why, then Christianity may come to nothing after all, for want of the antagonism which is the necessary condition of historical development. The risk is real; yet may we not fall back on the consoling thought that at every great crisis the needed man always makes his appearance, if not sent by the living God, then produced by the unconscious forces at work in the universe? However this may be, the fact is that one adequate representative of universality did make his appearance in due season—we might say two, indeed—the first being *Stephen*, the second *Paul*. Stephen, however, was only a blossom nipped by persecution, so that of Paul alone need we take account.*

* Baur's views on Paul, his life, work, and writings, are set forth in his work, "Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi."

That Saul of Tarsus, once a Pharisaic zealot and bitter opponent of Christianity, should be changed into a Christian, and *such* a Christian: not merely a believer in Jesus as the Christ, but entering with all the enthusiasm of a passionate nature and all the logical consistency of a powerful intellect into the universal aspect of Christ's teaching, treating that which had once been everything to him—the *law*—as nothing, and insisting that in Christ is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, but only a new humanity, is a sufficiently remarkable phenomenon. It is one of the great difficulties which naturalistic criticism has to grapple with, for to account for Paul's conversion on naturalistic principles is a hard task. Baur, conscious of this, did not attempt to explain the fact, but left the unsolved problem to other more adventurous spirits. Enough for him that Paul the persecutor was converted somehow. In the converted Pharisee was at length provided what was needed to insure for Christianity a career. The opposing views are now furnished with advocates. In Paul universality has got a champion able single-handed to defend it against all comers. The Judaistic tendency, on the other hand, as already hinted, has numerous if not equally able advocates in the eleven companions of Jesus. The state of the case is thus Paul *ver-*

sus the whole body of the original apostles—that is, according to Dr. Baur.

But what evidence is there of the alleged contrariety between the eleven on the one hand and Paul on the other in their respective views of the Gospel? If such diversity existed there ought to be clear traces of it in the New Testament. And the Tübingen critic tells us that there are and undertakes to point them out. He finds in various places plain indications of conflict between Paul and at least two of the original apostles—the men of most influence, the pillars of the church, viz., Peter and John. Of the opposition between Paul and John the proof is drawn from the book of Revelation, which is regarded as the work of John the apostle, and as the only genuine Johannine writing in the New Testament. The Balaamites, Nicolaitans, or followers of the woman Jezebel, who eat flesh offered to idols, are the members of the Pauline party in the churches of Asia Minor. The text, Rev. 21:14, in which the number twelve is applied to the apostles as corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel, evidently excludes Paul from the apostolate. When the church of Ephesus is praised for testing some who called themselves apostles and were not, Rev. 2:2, Paul and his associates are obviously aimed at.

Of the opposition between Paul and Peter tra-

ces are found in the reference in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, to parties existing among them, one of which named itself after Paul and another after Peter, and in the account given by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians of his collision with Peter at Antioch. Both of these epistles are held to be unquestionably of Pauline authorship, and therefore absolutely trustworthy. The main stress of the argument turns on the passage in Gal. 2:11-21, and indeed we may say on the whole of the second chapter of that remarkable epistle, from which it is inferred that Paul stood opposed not only to Peter but to the whole eleven. The "false brethren," ver. 4, are held to be the eleven. The phrases "those who seemed to be somewhat," "who seemed to be pillars," are taken to be sneering allusions to the esteem in which the eleven were held by the Judaistic party. The giving of the right hand of fellowship at the close of the conference was, we are told, but a hollow truce between two irreconcilable parties, an agreement that each party should continue to hold its own views, and that they should divide the world between them. The subsequent scene at Antioch shows Peter standing on the platform of a Jewish-Christian halfness, binding together faith and the ceremonial law, and deeming the keeping of the law necessary to salvation, though not of

itself sufficient for salvation; and we are given to understand that the effect of Paul's energetic remonstrance was a permanent alienation between him and Peter, fruitful of evil consequences. One of the most grievous results was the rise of a Judaistic Anti-Pauline propagandism which assiduously carried on its operations in all the churches founded by the apostle of the Gentiles.

Traces of the alleged antagonism between Paul and the original apostles are discovered in the only two other epistles which, besides the above-named, are recognized as Pauline, 2 *Corinthians* and *Romans*. In the former the expression "superlative apostles," apostles ever-so-much,* is held to be a sarcastic reference to the eleven. The Epistle to the Romans, though containing no express reference to parties in the church, according to Baur, owed its origin to these. His theory is that Paul wrote the epistle to a church he had not founded or visited, in which, therefore, he had no personal enemies, that he might in a didactic way give a full demonstration of his universalistic view of Christianity in opposition to Judaistic particularism. The kernel of the epistle is thus to be found in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters, in which the writer endeavors

* 2 Cor. 11:5, τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων; "the chiefest apostles" in Authorized Version.

to adjust his Gentile gospel to the prerogatives of the Jewish nation as an elect people.

Such is the evidence adduced in proof of irrecconcilable, or at least serious antagonism between Paul and the eleven and the two great parties into which the Apostolic church was divided, the universalist party having Paul at its head and the Judaist party led by the former companions of Jesus. The subsequent course of events is supposed to have been this: After the controversy had raged fiercely for a time, the men of a later generation began to grow weary of strife and to long for and aim at a reconciliation, in the belief that the opposing views were not so utterly incompatible as their fathers had imagined. And so it came to pass that the war of parties ceased, and the Catholic Church was formed by their union and a composite creed framed which blended together the watchwords of opposite camps. Thus the history of the church for a hundred years, dating from the time of Paul, has three periods. First, there is the period of controversy; second, the period during which the process of conciliation went on; third, the period when that process reached its completion.

According to the theory we are now expounding, all the books of the New Testament belong to one or other of these periods. One group

sprang out of the great controversy, and express the views and passions of the combatants; a second group bear traces of being written under the influence of the spirit of conciliation; a third speak the thoughts of an age when union had been achieved and the memory of past strife was fading away. All the writings without exception are supposed to betray the influence of a theological tendency, the only difference between them being the particular tendencies by which they are respectively animated.

First in time came the controversial group, embracing five books: the *Apocalypse*, written by the apostle John, and the four epistles of Paul alone recognized as genuine, those to the *Galatian*, *Corinthian*, and *Roman* churches. These books alone of all the books in the New Testament are held to be of apostolic authorship; and of course they were the earliest written, from the simple fact of their belonging to the period of controversy. An inexperienced person might naturally suggest that there was an earlier period still, that of Christ himself, and ask why there should not have been earlier writings, telling in simple unsophisticated language the story of his life. But we are given to understand that no such books are to be found in the New Testament, not even in the case of the Gospels. They also are writings with a tendency,

and relate the history of Jesus with a distinct coloring. Their proper place, in short, is in one of the next two groups.

The second group, wherein traces of the spirit of conciliation are discernible, is a much larger one than the first, embracing the first three, commonly called Synoptical Gospels, Acts, the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistles of James and Peter. The interest in connection with this group revolves chiefly around the historical books—the Synoptical Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. With reference to these, the theory now under consideration undertakes to explain their respective *rôles* in the drama of reconciliation.

The first and third Gospels, which bear the names of Matthew and Luke, had for their authors men belonging to opposite parties, but each animated by a conciliatory spirit. The former was written by a Judaist, who told the story of our Lord's life so as to make it acceptable to Paulinists, and the latter by a Paulinist, who constructed his narrative in the same friendly spirit as towards Judaists, while contriving to make it tell very decisively in favor of Gentile Christianity. Both Gospels are based on older forms in which the life of Jesus was presented from partisan points of view: "Matthew," on a gospel current

among the Ebionites, called the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*; "Luke," on the solitary gospel acknowledged and used by Marcion, the Gnostic heretic, the contents of which we learn from a controversial work against Marcion by Tertullian. Tertullian's view as to this gospel of Marcion's was that it was a mutilated edition of the canonical Luke, with everything omitted that savored of Judaism or was distasteful to a man who thought the Old Testament religion and Christianity so different that they could not proceed from the same God. The Tübingen theory inverts the state of the case, and maintains that Marcion's gospel was earlier than the canonical Luke; that in it the life of Christ was related with a strong Paulinist bias; and that at a later date a Paulinist, animated by a conciliatory aim, took it up, added to it, toned it down, and so made it palatable to Jewish tastes, while still retaining a strong flavor of universalism.

As for the author of the second Gospel, a very ignoble part is assigned to him. He is supposed to have had both the first and the third Gospel before him, and to have compiled his narrative in a spirit of neutrality, leaving out everything in either of his predecessors that leaned too decidedly to either side. A book got up in this way ought to be a very dull, uninteresting affair. But it so

happens that Mark's narrative is particularly lively and graphic. In explanation of this we are told that the graphic element has been introduced to hide the poverty of an otherwise colorless recital.

It hardly needs to be stated that, according to Dr. Baur, the Synoptical Gospels, as we now have them, are all of comparatively late date. All books of a conciliatory tendency must have been post-apostolic. Luke's Gospel, if made up from that used by Marcion, cannot have been written much before A. D. 150, Marcion's date being about 140. *Matthew* is supposed to have been written some twenty years earlier than Luke, and *Mark* rather later than the middle of the second century.

The mode in which the theory deals with the *Acts of the Apostles* is very naïve. It is represented as an apologetic work, having for its aim to bring Judaists and Paulinists into fraternal relations, and adopting for this end the expedient of making Peter, the head of the Judaistic party, act as much as possible after the manner of Paul, and Paul, in the second part, as much as possible after the manner of Peter. The idea that the work had an apologetic aim had been previously promulgated by Schneckenburger,* who, however,

* In a work on the aim of the Acts ("über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte." 1841).

had no intention of calling in question its historical reliableness, his view being that the aim of the writer influenced him only in the *selection* of his material. But in the hands of Dr. Baur what Schneckenburger called selection became *invention*. That some historical facts are contained in the book, possibly derived from manuscripts of Luke, he did not deny; but in many sections he saw nothing else than pure inventions to serve a purpose. He supposes the work to have been written at a time when the opposed parties, having already made considerable approximations and being desirous of complete union, needed only to be told that the notion of a radical antagonism between Peter and Paul was a mistake, that in views and public action they were very much alike, and that there had always been a good understanding between them. The book, he says, "is the conciliatory effort and overture of peace of a Paulinist, who would purchase the recognition of Gentile Christianity by Jewish Christians by concessions to Judaism in the name of his own party."*

It would be tedious to go into detail to illustrate the working out of this amiable programme. Suffice it to say that the story of Cornelius is supposed to be invented in order to represent Peter

* "Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche," p. 128.

as equally with Paul a believer in the universal destination of the gospel, and in the consequent antiquation of the ceremonial law. The account of the Council of Jerusalem was concocted to make it appear that on the question regarding circumcision the elder apostles and Paul were in perfect accord. Even the story of Simon Magus is held to be an invention to meet a difficulty in the way of mediation; for the original of Simon Magus, we are assured, is the apostle Paul. Under that name he figures in the *Clementines*, a writing proceeding from the Judaist party, and full of bitterness against Paul, who, under the disguise of Simon Magus, appears as the enemy of the gospel, following in the footsteps of Peter and striving to mar his work as an apostle. The author of *Acts* being acquainted with the Simon myth, and aware how current it was, could not ignore it; but to neutralize its effect as a story fitted to perpetuate hostility against Paul and stereotype existing alienations, he adopted the expedient of bringing the apostle Peter and Simon Magus into contact before Paul appeared on the stage of history, to suggest the inference that the identification of Simon with Paul was another historical blunder!

The last group of New Testament writings, representing the period of completed reconcilia-

tion, embraces the *Pastoral Epistles*—those to Timothy and Titus—and the *fourth Gospel* and the *epistles ascribed to John*. In common with the epistles to Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, the pastorals have for their task to deal with the difficulties in the way of the construction or consolidation of the catholic church arising from the heretical movements that were so rife in the second century, those especially associated with the name of the Gnostics. But they deal with the difficulty in another way. The epistles to Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians deal with Gnostic error doctrinally, appropriating whatever was in affinity with Christianity and rejecting the rest. The Pastoral Epistles, on the other hand, deal with Gnostic error ecclesiastically, seeking to fortify the church against heretical influence by the establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. The church could not be strong as long as she was without an organization binding her into a compact body, and the means of unity was found in the Episcopate; and the pastorals are devoted to the task of erecting the episcopal system. From this view of their origin it follows of course that these epistles could not have been written by Paul, or indeed earlier than the middle of the second century.

Last in time, though not in importance, comes

the *fourth Gospel*. This book, according to Dr. Baur, was written by a *Christian Gnostic*, who in his idea of Christianity soared high above the antagonisms of the past and welded them together into an indissoluble unity. In place of apostles contending together for sovereignty comes, in this Gospel, the Holy Spirit as the universal Christian principle common to both Peter and Paul and the tendencies they represent. In the Johannine theology Judaism and Paulinism lose their distinctive features and are merged in a higher unity. Faith, in the fourth Gospel, is a principle of fundamental importance not less than in the Pauline system; but the object of faith is not Christ's death, but Christ's person, Christ being viewed as the Logos incarnate, yea, God himself. Then in the fourth Gospel faith, however important, is still subordinate to love. Love is the highest idea in the Johannine theology. Then as for the law, of which so much is said by Paul and whose claims he shows himself so anxious to satisfy in his theory of salvation, in the fourth Gospel it is spoken of as something antiquated, as something with which the Christian has nothing to do and which has no claims to be considered. In love, faith and works find their higher unity and lose their separate existence; and the particularism of Judaism, with all the antagonisms connected with it, dis-

appears in the general contrast of the two opposed principles of light and darkness which form the background of the writer's theory of the universe. Thus this Gospel represents the final stage of the process of development in which the end returns to the beginning, giving, instead of the immediate unity of opposites in Christ's teaching, a unity mediated by conflict, and all the richer on that account. The probable date of the Gospel is alleged to be between 160 and 170.

Such in brief outline is the theory. In proceeding now to criticise this theory it is unnecessary to say that we are fully sensible of its cleverness and boldness and of the vast learning and infinite ingenuity with which it is supported. These are altogether very imposing and fascinating, and it takes a little time for the admiring reader of Dr. Baur's books to recover himself. But by-and-by it becomes apparent that the theory has many vulnerable points.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING HIS THEORY.

In the first place, while professedly historical and critical in its method, the theory is based upon two philosophical assumptions, one being that the miraculous is impossible, the other that all historical development must proceed according to the law of Hegelian logic. The former needs

only to be stated; on the latter a few sentences of explanation may be offered.

In the foregoing exposition we have kept Hegelianism well in the background, partly that we might not trouble our readers with unfamiliar and repulsive phrases, and partly in justice to Dr. Baur; for it would not be fair to suggest or imply that he brought a cut-and-dried *a priori* philosophy to his task, and then proceeded to discover or invent facts to suit his conclusions. Nevertheless, it is the simple truth that the Tübingen theory is Hegelian not only in form but in spirit. The account given of the origin of Christianity is as completely dominated by the Hegelian law of development by antagonism as if the author had set himself this problem: "On the principles of Hegelianism the course taken by Christianity must have been as follows: In Christ, the founder of the new religion, must meet two principles opposed to each other. In a subsequent stage these opposed principles must pass into a state of open conflict, each becoming the distinctive watchword of a party. Then, finally, the two principles must pass from a state of antagonism into a state of reconciliation, and become again, as at the commencement, united, constituting together in developed form the faith of the catholic church. Find facts to verify this hypothesis."

The inevitable consequence of this philosophic bias is apparent in Baur's writings. The account given of the origin of Christianity and its canonical literature is not history, but a gross caricature. It is, to say the least, very improbable that the real course of history should follow so closely the requirements of a philosophical system. The attempt to make it appear as if it did will almost certainly transform the actors in the historical drama into puppets, mouthpieces of tendencies, passive instruments of "the Idea." Such, indeed, is the well-known vice of the Hegelian method of handling history. Competent and even friendly critics have remarked that on that method historical characters are not real men, but ghostly generalities. Logic is the all-controlling power. Logical categories of the widest kind: being in itself, being for self, being in and for self, the indifference, the difference, the unity of the difference and the indifference, and so forth, take the place of the historical realities, and are so operated with that history has all the blood sucked out of it, and historical characters become dead-idea schemes.*

Thus Christ himself, in Baur's hands, becomes little more than a centre of unity for two opposed

* So Schwartz, in a work on the history of recent German theology.

tendencies—the teacher of a universal ethical religion and a claimant for the honors of Messiahship. Anything additional, putting more contents into the person and teaching of Jesus than suits the initial stage of development, must be reckoned spurious. If we find Jesus in any of the Gospels claiming to be a superhuman being, such texts may with the utmost confidence be set down as spurious: such a thought could not possibly belong to the initial stage, but only to the final, when the human Messiah had developed into a Deity through the love and reverence of his followers. For the same reason all texts concerning the atoning significance of Christ's death must be relegated to a later time.

In the same way all the writers of the New Testament books become ghosts instead of living men. None of them are allowed to tell their story in good faith and natural simplicity. Every one of them must be the conscious constant mouth-piece of a theological tendency either of the antagonisms or of the conciliatory movement or of the completed union. Paul must be a hot-headed universalian, John a bigoted Judaist, the writer of Acts the deliberate inventor of a historical romance intended to serve the purposes of conciliation, and so on through the whole list. In short, whatever be the truth as to the allegation that the

New Testament books are all tendency-writings, there can be no doubt that the Tübingen theorists are tendency-critics, have tendency on the brain, so to speak ; insomuch that one who has become familiar with their method can tell beforehand what they will say about any particular book.

Thus far of general characteristics. Let us now look at some points in detail, and first at the account given of the initial stage. Baur's representation of the teaching of Jesus is not altogether false. It is especially true in so far as it makes spirituality and universality essential characteristics of the Christian religion as exhibited by its Founder. These were indeed the grand features of the kingdom he proclaimed. But the theory errs in tracing these to Gentile sources. The political universality of Rome and the ethical subjectivity of Greece did not give Jesus his doctrine, but merely prepared the world to receive it. He was not a slavish debtor even to the Old Testament either for these parts of his teaching or for his doctrine of God. His great thoughts of the divine Fatherhood, and of the dignity of man as God's son, and of the kingdom of love, have their roots in Old Testament prophecy. Nevertheless their marvellous originality is undeniable. As for the assertion that Jesus owed his ideal of human life to the Essenes, it is utterly baseless. In the

first place, there is not the slightest trace of a historical connection between him and the Essenes; in the second place, it is not the fact that his view of life is ascetic. The morality of the gospel is heroic, abstinence being enjoined not as a virtue in itself, but as a sacrifice on the altar of devotion to the kingdom. The ideal of Christian character is not the monk, but the soldier. The two coincide in particular acts, but how diverse the spirit in which the same acts are performed!

On the other hand, the assertion that Jesus claimed and accepted the title of Messiah is unquestionably true. It is an important admission on Dr. Baur's part, for it is fatal both to his theory and to that of Strauss. To the former because a Messiah was required by public expectation to play the part of a miracle-worker in order to gain credence—a part not easy to play successfully if miracles are impossible. To the latter, because, according to the mythical hypothesis, miraculous narratives are the product of faith in the Messiahship of Jesus; whereas if Jesus really claimed to be the Messiah, faith in his Messianic claims must have been the effect of miracles, real or reputed.

NO ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE APOSTLES.

Passing now to the stage of controversy when, according to the theory, two parties arose, one

fighting for a Christianity which was merely a reformed Judaism, having for its creed that the man Jesus was the Christ; the other contending for a world-wide Christianity independent of Judaism—the point of importance here is, how far is the alleged contrariety between the original apostles and Paul a matter of fact? Now the alleged radical antagonism is antecedently very improbable, even if only for the simple reason that the eleven had been for years the companions of Jesus the teacher, Dr. Baur himself being witness, of a universal religion. Is it credible that the men who “had been with Jesus” so long remained utterly insensible to the Master’s spirit of catholic human sympathy and to the universalistic genius of the new religious movement? That were to say that they were totally unworthy to be Christ’s disciples, and that the careful training to which they had been subjected was a complete failure. Sensible of this, Ritschl, once himself an adherent of Dr. Baur, speaks of it as historically impossible “that the view of the autonomy and universality of Christianity, which filled the inner life of Jesus, remained hid from his personal disciples.”*

But what of the proof adduced to show that, whatever might be *a priori* to be looked for, such

* “Die Entstehung der Altkatholischen Kirche,” p. 47.

contrariety did exist as matter of fact? Speaking generally, the interpretation put upon the texts cited must be pronounced strained. Such is the opinion of even theologians altogether free from orthodox bias, naturalistic in their philosophy, and followers of Baur to a certain extent. Keim, e. g., entirely dissents from Baur's reading of the second chapter of *Galatians*, holding that the original apostles did not insist on the circumcision of Gentile converts, and that it was owing to their generous and magnanimous bearing that the church was brought to accept the Jerusalem compact.* The scene at Antioch, read without bias, does not at all bear out the notion of an opposition in principle between Paul and Peter. What Paul charges his brother disciple with is not holding Judaistic opinions, but hypocrisy, inconsistency in conduct, through moral weakness, with his avowed principles, which, as described by Paul, are identical with his own. To call Peter a Judaist on the ground of that passage would be as unreasonable as to call him a traitor because through fear of man he denied a Master whom all the time he dearly loved. In both crises of his history Peter revealed the same moral weakness: in the earlier instance denying his Lord through fear of the ridicule of servant-maids; in

* Vide "Aus dem Urchristenthum; 4 Der Apostel Konvent."

the latter, turning his back on Gentile Christians, with whom he had previously had no scruples in freely associating, through fear of Judaistic bigots from Jerusalem.

If the attempted proof breaks down in the texts cited from the Epistle to the Galatians, it is hardly worth while examining the weaker links in the chain of evidence taken from other places.

In denying the alleged Judaistic bias of Peter, James, John, and the rest of the eleven, we do not mean to say that they were enthusiastic advocates of Christian universality, like Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. They certainly were not. They passed through no intense religious experience like his, fitted to make them such. Their position was that of men brought gradually to acquiesce calmly though decidedly in the admission of Gentile believers to the full fellowship of the church, on the sole ground of faith in Christ, apart from circumcision. They accepted the situation as the will of God clearly manifested by events, and as in accordance with the whole spirit of their Master's teaching. They did not, like Paul, throw themselves into the new situation with passionate earnestness. Therefore it was that they did not then at least desire to be apostles to the Gentiles. They felt that they were not fitted to become signally successful agents in that

sphere. They humbly acknowledged that they were not called to that work. Their judgment was wise as well as honorable to themselves; for something more than acceptance of the situation is wanted in the apostles of a religious revolution. When the Christian faith took root in the Gentile city of Antioch, the good genial Barnabas knew that there was just one man who was supremely qualified to guide the movement. He went to Tarsus to seek *Saul*. Acts 11 : 25.

Another admission must be made. While serious conflict of opinion between Paul and the eleven is denied, it is not denied that there were grave differences of opinion within the church. But the apostles being at one, such contrariety of view can be regarded only as a fact of subordinate importance, wholly unfit to support a huge superstructure of criticism like that presented in the literature of the Tübingen theory. That criticism we must now briefly notice.

TÜBINGEN CRITICISM EXAMINED.

As already remarked, the general character of the Tübingen criticism of the New Testament books is that it carries the hypothesis of tendency to extravagant lengths. Every writer must be the mouthpiece of some phase in the great dialectic movement which is to have for its issue the crea-

tion of the Christian creed and of the catholic church. The penalty of all exaggeration is reaction, and accordingly the conclusions of the Tübingen criticism have been largely modified by later investigations as conducted by men untrammelled by orthodox traditions, such as Keim, Renan, Hilgenfeld, Pfleiderer. Recent critics, e. g., are generally agreed that besides the four epistles recognized as genuine by Dr. Baur, a large proportion of the other epistles ascribed to Paul must be acknowledged to be genuine. Serious doubt, even in skeptical quarters, now hovers only over the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles.

In like manner the historicity, the *bona fides*, and the artlessness of the Gospels, at least the Synoptics, receive from most recent inquirers an ampler homage. Dr. Baur himself recognized the comparative reliableness of *Matthew* as a source of information concerning the life and ministry of Jesus, so that little need be said on that topic. His views respecting *Mark* and *Luke* are now generally discredited. *Mark*, instead of being the latest, is now by most critics deemed the earliest of the Synoptical Gospels, and valued as a fresh, vivid presentation of the leading scenes in the personal ministry, taken from the mouth of an eye-witness. The Tübingen view of *Luke*, ac-

ording to which it is a revision of an earlier form of the gospel known as Marcion's, is finally exploded. Even the author of "Supernatural Religion" confesses himself convinced by the reasoning of Dr. Sanday, in his thorough discussion of the question in his valuable work on "The Gospels in the Second Century." When he yields the point the most skeptical may be satisfied that there is no room for even plausible contention against the position that in the canonical Luke we have the original form of the third Gospel.

This Gospel, according to Dr. Baur, is to a very great extent influenced in its representation of the evangelic history by a Paulinist or Gentile bias. Proofs of this he finds in certain divergences from Matthew, assumed to be the more trustworthy account. They are the following: Matthew knows only of one scene of Christ's ministry, Galilee; Luke tells of two ministries, one in Galilee, another in Samaria. Samaria represents the Gentile world, and the Samaritan mission is an invention. Besides the mission of the twelve, Luke relates the mission of the seventy, and, as if to make it appear the more important, he borrows from the earlier a large part of the instructions given to the Galilean evangelists and attaches them to the later. The seventy represent the

Gentile nations, supposed to be equal in number, and their mission is a pure invention to give the Gentile mission of later days a footing in the life of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount, as reported in Matthew, is broken up by Luke and dispersed over his pages, as if to make the ordination of the twelve seem an event of little significance.

These are plausibilities, but little more. As to the first, it is not the intention of the third evangelist to relate a formal and elaborate ministry on Samaritan ground. The utmost that can be said is that he introduces some stray Samaritan incidents in themselves perfectly credible. A Paulinistic bias may have led him to introduce into his narrative these incidents found in his sources. If so, we should be thankful for his Paulinism, that is, his keen interest in Gentile Christianity, to which we owe precious fragments that we should have been sorry to lose. The mission of the seventy has its difficulties, chiefly this, that it is not easy to make room and scope for it at the stage of the history at which it comes in. The best way of dealing with it is to treat it as not more, but less, important than the mission of the twelve, and to regard the distribution of the words of Jesus between the two missions as due to the way in which they were given in Luke's sources. Finally, the dispersion of the

materials of the Sermon on the Mount raises the question: Did Luke disperse or did Matthew collect? The one hypothesis is as legitimate as the other.

The opinion of dispassionate critics, who have no theory to make out, is that the third evangelist was a candid chronicler who, in all good faith, made the best use of the materials at his command in the various documents to which he alludes at the beginning of his Gospel. He was certainly not a dry historian who felt no religious interest in what he wrote. He rejoiced to believe that the gospel of Jesus was emphatically a gospel of grace, and therefore a gospel for social outcasts and for Gentiles; and he was careful in the selection of his materials to make this conspicuous. Thereby his Gospel has only gained in spiritual value without losing in historical reliability.

A similar view is to be taken of the Acts of the Apostles on good grounds regarded as of identical authorship with the third Gospel. The Tübingen view of this book stands or falls with the alleged antagonism between Peter and Paul. If there was no antagonism, then there was no need for invention to make Peter appear in his public conduct like Paul. The behavior ascribed to Peter in the first part of the book, as, for example, in

the story of Cornelius, then becomes quite natural and credible. The invention hypothesis is not in keeping with the reliable character of the book at those points in the narrative where we have it in our power to test its accuracy. Dr. Baur and his supporters, indeed, think otherwise, and endeavor to show that the statements of Acts, wherever they can be controlled, are altogether untrustworthy. Their chief instance is the narrative of the council at Jerusalem in Acts 15, which is declared to be utterly irreconcilable with Paul's statements in Galatians 2. Now we do not affirm that the harmonizing of the two accounts presents no difficulties, but we do assert that there are no such differences as justify the position that the author of Acts has falsified history to present an aspect of agreement between the eleven and Paul which was not real. The historian speaks of a public meeting; the apostle of a private conference. It is intrinsically probable that there were both in connection with a matter of grave importance; that neither writer should mention both is not surprising; that the historian should refer to the public meeting, and the apostle to the private conference, with whose proceedings only those present were conversant, and on whose proceedings his purpose in writing led him to lay special stress, was most natural. The historian knows

of no difference of opinion between the eleven and Paul; on the contrary, he represents Peter and James as taking the lead in bringing the meeting to adopt a resolution favorable to Gentile liberties. Paul says that after he had explained his view of the gospel to the eleven or the leading men among them, they "added nothing" to him, that is, gave no additional instructions, did not treat his gospel as defective and requiring supplement. They might have had their anxieties before conference, making explanations necessary; but the explanations given, Paul informs us, were deemed quite satisfactory. In view of these facts the verdict of Reuss seems thoroughly justified:

"The author of the Acts merits not the reproach of having altered the facts to make them speak in favor of his view, but gliding more lightly over the opposition Paul encountered at Jerusalem, his aim was to insist more upon the result obtained; while Paul, preoccupied with the need of raising the question to the height of principles, is led to insist more on the efforts required to vindicate principles."*

The apologetic theory of the book, as distinct from the invention hypothesis, is, whether true or false, at all events quite legitimate. To assimilate, by *selection* of materials, the public conduct

* "Théologie Chrétienne," vol. II. p. 335.

of Peter and Paul might conceivably be one aim of the writer. For though there was no radical contrariety between the views of Christianity held by the leaders of the church, there certainly were two parties in the church, and we can imagine the author of the Acts animated by a praiseworthy desire to make his narrative serve an irenical purpose. At the same time we do not think that this motive exercised a very decisive influence on the composition of the book. That its author was guided by a particular interest we have no doubt. In the Acts of the Apostles, as in the third Gospel, it is easy to recognize the influence of a desire to show that the gospel was for mankind, not for Jews only. The writer is with all his heart a believer in Pauline universality; but his interest therein is religious, not controversial. A Gentile himself, he is thankful to know that to the Gentiles God has granted eternal life, and he writes to a friend who shares the same sympathies. Even had there been no difference of opinion between Jewish and Gentile Christians as to the continued obligation of the law, he might have shown a not less lively interest in the great truth that through Christ had come into the world a benefit for the whole human race—a religion forming the basis of a new humanity, and destined in its onward course to unite men into a

holy brotherhood, having one Father in heaven and one hope of eternal salvation. Surely it does not need the carnality of religious contention to invest such a truth with the power of awakening enthusiasm! Can we not conceive a Gentile Christian familiar with the history of the Apostolic church, from its first beginnings in Jerusalem to its diffusion throughout Asia and Europe, tracing its steady advance, always keeping in view its ultimate destination as a religion for the whole earth, without having any other end in view than just to tell the thrilling story?

In connection with the *fourth Gospel* we shall only notice very briefly what may be called the chief argument of Dr. Baur against Johannine authorship, based on internal evidence. It is drawn from the *Christology* of this Gospel.

The view of the person of Christ therein presented is held to be much too developed to be found in any writing emanating from an apostle. Baur recognizes three distinct types of doctrine in the New Testament as to the import of Christianity in general and the person of Christ in particular. The first type is that according to which Christianity is simply Judaism spiritualized, and Jesus the Messiah, Son of God in the Messianic sense and by his death, founder of a new covenant for the remission of sins. This type is represent-

ed by the Synoptic Gospels; and especially by *Matthew*. The second is that in which Christianity stands in opposition to the Law, and Christ is not only the Messiah, but the Lord of the community, object at once of Christian faith and worship, yet nothing more than a man, a man deified, the second Adam, the spiritual, heavenly man. This is the Pauline type of Christology. The third is that in which the opposition between Law and Gospel is lost in a higher unity, and Christ ceases to be a mere man, or even properly a man at all, but as the *Logos* is identified with the absolute essence of God. This is the type of Christology in the fourth Gospel, and as the highest and most advanced must, it is held, have come last in the process of evolution. First an *Ebionitic* Christ, then a *Pauline*, then the *pseudo-Johannine*—such is the order; and it is maintained that John the apostle, like all the eleven, must be conceived as belonging to the earliest Ebionitic stage.

We do not admit the accuracy of the above representation, especially as regards the Pauline Christology. But without going into that, two questions may be asked regarding these three types. 1. In what relation do they stand to Christ's own utterances concerning himself? 2. Assuming a gradual growth in the conception

of Christ's person within the New Testament, does the highest stage necessarily carry us beyond the apostolic age?

As to the first, the assumption of the Tübingen theorists is that all Christ's own utterances were of the least developed type. On this assumption we remark that it begs the question at issue, which is just this: Is Christianity supernatural? is Christ a divine Being? If he be divine, as the church universal believes, then it is quite credible that he uttered such sayings concerning himself as we find in the fourth Gospel. But, it may be asked, why then are they found only there? The answer may be that the writer of the fourth Gospel had attained to a fuller understanding of Christ's doctrine. We are not entitled to assume that because Jesus taught as high a doctrine concerning himself as we find in the fourth Gospel, therefore it must have been fully apprehended at the first or equally apprehended by all who heard him. It is quite conceivable that of those who heard Jesus speak of himself, now as Son of Man, now as Son of God, some should regard him mainly on the human side, some mainly on the divine.

As to the second question—Can we conceive Christology assuming the developed form of the fourth Gospel within the apostolic generation?—

we make the following observations. Let us assume that all the disciples were alike in their spiritual capacity and that the difference perceptible in their writings was due to the educating effect of events and of time. Even on that hypothesis it is credible that the fourth Gospel proceeded from the apostle John. According to the tradition of the early church, he lived till near the close of the first century, and his Gospel was written later than all the others, and much later than Paul's Epistles. What wonder if we find in a Gospel written at so advanced a period a grasp of the "mystery of godliness" more comprehensive not only than that of the Synoptic Gospels, but even than that of Paul? Coming last, the writer would have the benefit of the thoughts of those who went before. As we have seen that the alleged antagonism between Paul and the eleven is not well founded, we can imagine John perusing with sympathetic spirit the writings of Paul and receiving powerful stimulus from them. Then, apart from the direct influence of Paul's writings, the indirect effect of Paul's thoughts, current in the church, must be taken into account as stimulating the evangelist's mind and leading him to reflect on words of Christ out of which could be educed a doctrine of Christ's person higher even than that of Paul. Such an action of the faith of

the church on an individual mind, in quickening recollection and increasing appreciation of the teaching of our Lord concerning himself, would be only analogous to the known influence of events in bringing the eleven to a cordial acquiescence in the proposal to admit the Gentiles to fellowship on equal terms. It is, therefore, by no means improbable that the ever-deepening reverence of believers for their Saviour and Lord on the one hand, and the contradictions of unbelief or false belief on the other, led the apostle John to unfold the full meaning of a title—Son of God—which, at an earlier period, had been allowed to remain in germinal form; to unfold it not by speculative reflection chiefly, but by recording sayings of Jesus uttered in circumstances similar to those of the writer, viz., in presence of the contradictions of unbelief.

In these observations we have assumed the possibility of a growing advancement in the knowledge of Christ, even in the case of inspired apostles. There ought to be nothing objectionable in such a supposition to the most devout mind. Paul makes the confession, "Now I know in part." All the apostles knew in part, and one might know more than another. The greater limitedness of one apostle's knowledge as compared with another's, or with the same apostle's

knowledge at one time as compared with another time, does not imply that error must be mixed up with the views of the less informed apostle. It only signifies that the pure light of truth is broken up into the colored rays of the prism under the wise guidance of the divine Spirit. We can conceive of an apostle who had not entered so fully into the mystery of our Lord's divinity as John giving a very full, lifelike picture of his humanity, without prejudice to his claim to be more than man. This is, in truth, the actual state of the case, as we see when we compare, say, the first Gospel with the fourth. Hints of the higher aspect of Christ's person are not wanting in the former; there is one text in particular of a markedly Johannine character. We refer to Matt. 11:27: "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Still, it is to the fourth Gospel we must turn for the fully developed doctrine of our Lord's divinity. The Christ of Matthew is preëminently the Son of Man; the Christ of John is preëminently the Son of God.

A word may here be said on the dates of the Gospels. The whole tendency of recent investigation has been to press these much farther back

than the position assigned to them by Dr. Baur. According to him the approximate dates are, of Matthew 130, of Luke 150, of Mark 150-160, of John 160-170. Competent judges of all schools now incline to place the fourth Gospel at least as far back as the beginning of the second century, and to assign to the Synoptical Gospels a considerably earlier origin.* It has been shown, from the very corrupt condition of the texts about the middle of the second century, that the Gospels must have been in circulation long before the time at which they are supposed by Dr. Baur to have come into existence. In connection with this line of argument important service has been rendered by Dr. Sanday, in his excellent work on "The Gospels in the Second Century," written in reply to "Supernatural Religion." The effect of his book is to demonstrate, by means of textual criticism, that the Tübingen account of the origin of the gospel cannot be true, and that the Tübingen construction of early church history is a castle in the air. Other writers have done good service in the same line, among whom may be specially mentioned Zahn. In a work recently published

* It is impossible to give the exact dates of the Gospels. The main point is that they belong to the apostolic age. The Synoptic Gospels were, according to all probability, not later than between 60 and 70 A. D. The probable date of the fourth Gospel is between 80 and 90 A. D.

on the "Diatessaron" of Tatian, this scholar, by a similar process of reasoning, arrives at the same conclusion as Dr. Sanday. Tatian's "Diatessaron" was a continuous narrative of our Lord's life constructed by selection from all the Gospels, John being specially drawn upon.* This fact has been ascertained by the help of a commentary, written on Tatian's book by the ancient father Ephraem the Syrian, which has been recently discovered and made the subject of learned study. Careful examination of Ephraem's work discloses the fact that the texts of the Gospel used by Tatian must have been in a very corrupt state, and the bearing of the fact on the question as to the dates of the Gospels is thus indicated by Zahn:

"Therefrom follows, in the first place, that between the autographs of the evangelists, on the one hand, and those manuscripts which, at latest between 160 and 170, the author of the Syriac version in the east and the author of the old Latin version in the west, and their Greek contemporaries, had in their hands, on the other, lay a history of the spread, emendation, and corruption of the gospel texts covering a decade; so that in view of the history of the text opinions as to the origin of John's Gospel such as Baur has ex-

* Zahn. "Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons." Theil I., p. 247.

pressed must appear simply as madness. It follows, further, that the element which remains the same in all copies of the originals and of the versions, amid all the variations that crept into the text between 150 and 160, must have been everywhere read at the beginning of the second century."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

To sum up, the points of our criticism are these:

1. The theory is the application of a philosophical system to Christianity with a foregone conclusion.

2. The exegetical basis of the theory does not stand examination.

3. The criticism of New Testament books associated with the theory has in most cases failed to commend itself to the approval of impartial investigators.

4. The doctrine of "tendency" has been carried to extravagant lengths.

5. Many of the phenomena in the New Testament on which this doctrine rests are imaginary; and those which are not are for the most part susceptible of a simple explanation. Thus Luke's undoubted interest in Paulinism, or in a Gentile Christianity, is religious, not controversial.

Let us not conclude this critical estimate without acknowledging that good has come out of the promulgation of this famous theory. It has done service even by the thorough-going nature of its arguments and conclusions, which makes it an extreme example of the "rigor and vigor" characteristic of German theories in general. It is always something to be thankful for when in any department of human knowledge a hypothesis is adequately stated, defended, and worked out. If it turn out an error, it is an error to which full justice has been done, and which may be finally put aside. Then we have to thank Dr. Baur for provoking by his theory an immense amount of inquiry among the learned in connection with questions of vital moment, bearing on the origin of Christianity, inquiry which in many ways has been fruitful of valuable results. As Hume's skepticism awoke Kant out of dogmatic slumber, and thus indirectly gave birth to the "Criticism of Pure Reason," a contribution of permanent value to the theory of knowledge, so Baur's theory has roused the Christian church to consider with increased carefulness the historical foundations of its faith, with the result, not of clearing away all difficulties, but certainly of adding to the strength of Christian conviction and greatly narrowing the sphere of controversy. Once

more, Dr. Baur, in advocating his peculiar views, incidentally directs attention to many Biblical phenomena of interest which had previously been overlooked, and which cast a fresh light on the books wherein they occur. The remark applies especially to the Gospel of Luke. Since the Tübingen theory was propounded, students of Scripture have seen, as they never saw before, the Pauline stamp on every page of that Gospel. For the accentuation of that one fact, both pulpit and pew owe a debt to the German theologian whose speculations have occupied our attention. For nothing is more fitted to make this Gospel a copious spring of grace, life, and salvation to the people than that our preachers should perceive how thoroughly it is pervaded by Paul's spirit, and how truly it is, as Renan has said, "the Gospel of the sinful."

This tract may fitly end with the statement of another truth which we have not learned from Dr. Baur. It is that the burden of the third Gospel is the burden of the whole New Testament. These sacred writings are not a heap of confusion and contradiction; on the contrary, amid much that is distinctive, there is throughout essential harmony. They owe their origin severally to the needs and conflicts of the primitive church, or particular sections of it, but the whole of the col-

lection has one theme, God's gift of grace in Christ Jesus. All the writers are deeply impressed with the conviction that with Christ a great good came into the world, and that his advent was an epoch-making event in the history of mankind. All regard that event as one in which all men have an interest, "good tidings of great joy," not for Jews only, but also for Gentiles. And the boon Christ brings, as conceived by all alike, is radically the same: reconciliation, peace on earth, between God and man, and between man and man; God as a gracious Father receiving sinful unworthy men as his children, and men once alienated regarding each other as brethren. The benefit is indeed apprehended and exhibited under different aspects, not conflicting, but rather complementary, and tending, when combined, to show the riches of divine grace. In the Synoptical Gospels it appears under the title of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, in accordance with our Lord's frequent though not exclusive mode of representation. In Paul's Epistles, and especially in the four great Epistles to the Roman, Corinthian, and Galatian Churches, the gift of grace is named *the righteousness of God*, and aptly sets the gospel in contrast to legalism; the gospel offering the righteousness of God as a gift to faith, while legalism has for its aim a



righteousness self-acquired. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the nature of Christianity is further illustrated by being viewed in relation to the Levitical religion. In this aspect it is the religion of unrestricted access to God, in contrast to the Levitical system which kept men at a distance; the religion of "the better hope through which we draw nigh to God." Heb. 7:19, R. V. Lastly, in John's Gospel the gift of God is chiefly set forth as *eternal life*, conferred on all who receive Jesus as the Son of God. "He that hath the Son hath life," is the characteristic message of the fourth evangelist. All the other writings of the New Testament are in full sympathy with the views set forth in those just named. Peter, James, and the John of the Apocalypse speak the same language as Paul and the four evangelists. John in his Gospel writes, "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This saying might be prefixed as a motto to the whole New Testament.

THE
RELIGIOUS VALUE
OF THE
DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY
PROF. C. M. DES ISLETS, PH. D.

ARGUMENT.

TIMELINESS of this discussion. The question stated. Relation between religious life and religious belief. What is true religion? The communion of a human person with a personal God. A personal God alone can satisfy the cravings of the human heart. The expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ satisfies the conscience. Corroborated by all the religious forms and ceremonies of humanity. The practical importance of some of the Christian doctrines considered: the incarnation, the God-man, the expiation of Jesus the strongest motive to our love. The resurrection of Jesus, its paramount importance. The Trinity. The practical value assigned to doctrines by the apostles. Further corroboration from the history of the Christian Church. Conclusion.

THE
RELIGIOUS VALUE
OF THE
DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

I.

THERE is a large number of people who believe that man needs to-day a more rational and more simplified religion. It is affirmed by many that the world is ripe for a more human Christianity, a Christianity freed from the dogmas of traditional faith, and it is further affirmed that the masses are ready to receive and accept such a religion; in proof of which the preaching of modern evangelists is adduced which, it is said, is entirely free from the dogmas and doctrines of old-style preaching. Platform lecturers of all sorts, magazine writers, newspaper editors—and I know not how many *dilettant* besides—all unite their voices in the cry that the orthodox faith has lost its hold upon the people; that the

church is losing her time in preaching, to the people of this age, old doctrines long since worn out, no longer suited to the times or the needs of the generation now upon the field of action. And yet, we are told, mankind are eager for the gospel. They yearn after it, feeling that in it are the words of eternal life, as is evidenced by the thousands that rush to hear any new evangelist who ignores the old traditional doctrine of the church and confines his preaching to the things in the Scriptures demanded by the present generation. Besides, it is argued that these superannuated doctrines have been tacked on to Christianity and have no essential relation to the principles of the Christian religion. The religion of Jesus Christ, they are fond of saying, is not a tangled mass of miraculous facts, but it is a new spirit, a new life; it is a life-giving principle thrown into the world to transform and sanctify it. One God, the Father of all men, a great humanity, constituting one large family of brothers—herein is all Christianity. As for the traditional doctrines of the fall, the incarnation, expiation upon the cross, these are dogmas that the present generation does not believe. They are parasites that have dried up and well nigh sapped the life out of the tree once planted by Jesus Christ; they are useless appendages of metaphysics, inventions

of theology or superstition; they are without influence over the souls of men and have no religious value; nay, they are actually detrimental to the growth of the spiritual life in the soul.

Now, let us examine this subject with an honest and candid spirit, eschewing prejudice to confine ourselves to principles. Let us state the question, too, as the opponents of orthodoxy themselves state it. Let us see whether it is true that the doctrines of orthodoxy are extraneous to or outside of the spirit of Christianity, whether these doctrines actually hinder the upbuilding of the kingdom of Christ in the soul.

I readily recognize what of truth there is in the affirmation of those who reject all creeds and all dogmas. We recognize that Christianity is a spirit and a life; it is a life-giving principle, a power of moral transformation and progress. But Christianity is all this only because it is a divine fact, an intervention of God in the world in order to reinstate fallen man to his Maker's favor which he had lost by sin; because it is a supernatural act of deliverance and restoration by which we are freed from the slavery of sin and born into a new life of obedience and love. Now, this divine fact is at the same time a miracle and a dogma—miracle and dogma that imply all the dogmas and doctrines of Christianity.

Further: we also recognize the difference between theology and religion, between the systems elaborated by human science and the facts or the truths revealed, that are the foundation of salvation. So it is not theological formulas that we are defending, but revealed truths; and we do this in behalf of the religious life and the spiritual interests of our souls. We insist upon this in order that we may not be misunderstood. What we are defending is not a scientific translation of the facts of Christianity attempted by theology; it is not the ecclesiastical dogmas as a product of human speculation; but rather, it is the facts of Christianity taken in their simplicity, or it is the dogmas of the Christian church considered as the affirmation of these very facts pure and simple.

I further acknowledge that outside of faith in Christ there may be a certain kind of religious life. But we insist upon it that the only religious life really worthy of the name is that which is produced by faith in Jesus Christ; that is, by the contact of the soul with the facts of Christianity, or rather with the person of Jesus Christ in whom these facts are incarnate in a living way. We hold that the facts of Christianity possess, of themselves, sanctifying power and a religious value that nothing in the world does equal. We cling to the doctrines of Christianity, not in the

interests of any school or sect, but in the name of our every-day religious life and for the sake of the upbuilding of vital piety in the heart of the believer. Now, in religion, everything that is not necessary is useless; everything that does not help is a hindrance and must be rejected. So that if it were shown that the doctrines which we are defending have no religious value, that far from being a help to a pious life they actually impede the soul's growth in grace, our decision would be soon taken. No matter how venerable the tradition that has preserved them, however highly our fathers might have prized them, we would abandon them at once and utterly. We assign too high a place to an earnest, devoted religious life, we love the church with too sincere a devotion, we are too jealous of the salvation of souls, to refuse to make a sacrifice that would make certain the triumph of the gospel in the world.

With this candid sincerity we do not hesitate to open a fearless and thorough discussion of the question that heads this little work.

This question is closely allied to another one, the answers to both also being closely related, to-wit: the relation that exists between religious life and religious belief. It has been held that religion, from its very essence, is absolutely inde-

pendent of the convictions of the mind, that we meet religious people among the sectaries of the most antagonistic systems. For instance, that a man may be a theist, a pantheist, a deist, or a materialist, and that his religious life will not be affected thereby. It is affirmed that religion is not an act of knowledge but a sentiment; that religion is the sentiment of the divine, and the divine is everything that is good, true, and beautiful: it is perfection, it is the ideal, it is the infinite. Thus understood, religion is a part of everything. A great spectacle of nature, like Niagara, or an awful conflagration or an awe-inspiring tornado or a beautiful work of art or a heroic deed—in a word, everything that is capable of awakening in us the sentiment of the infinite—is for us the occasion of religious emotion. This emotion is entirely independent of our belief concerning God, his nature and his attributes. Deists and pantheists certainly meet here on the same ground; for these emotions are the same in all men, whatever may be their intellectual or religious belief. Whether God is a personal being or not; whether he is distinct from the world or the two are absorbed into one and the same being; whether God is the creator of the universe or the sum of the natural forces in this world, sentiment is certainly the same whatever theory be held.

But the flaw lies here: they who thus argue are mistaken as to the nature of religion. They take for religion that which is not religion, and it is then easy for them to adapt it to various theories. If religion is but a vague sentiment of the infinite, a confused aspiration after the divine, then it ceases to have a domain peculiar to itself and becomes confused, now with art, now with philosophy, and now with science. For does not the artist or the philosopher, each one after his own fashion, aspire after the infinite and the divine? What is the effort of the artist to express the ideal, of whose radiant beauty he has had a glimpse as in a vision, but an ardent aspiration after the infinite? What is the ultimate object of the meditations of the thinker but that first principle of all things, that primary and universal law that contains all principles and explains all laws? But poetry, philosophy, art, and science are not, for all that, religion. The sentiment of the beautiful is not religion; neither is the philosophical spirit nor the scientific spirit. The religious sentiment has its specific and distinct object, and that is not the divine; that object is God. It is not an abstract idea; it is a living person. It is a God who sees and hears, who loves and desires to be loved, who answers them that call upon him and is found of them that seek

him. The communion of man with the living God—that is religion. Religion is man lifting himself up to God and opening communication with him by prayer, obedience, and love; religion is God coming down to man, dwelling in his heart, permeating his life, and leading him by the hand as a father leads a child. Religion is a free and intimate communion of hearts between God and man.

If this is religion, it goes without saying that the only philosophical systems that are religious are those that maintain the existence of a personal God. Every system that suppresses a personal God, by this act makes religion an impossibility. This is also true of every system that denies human personality. Religion, indeed, is a relation that implies two terms: the personality of man and the personality of God. Suppress either of these terms and religion ceases to exist. And this relation is realized by love, and love implies freedom. A system of fatalism that would make necessity the universal law would thereby be an anti-religious system.

II.

Let us learn from conscience and history what aspirations of the human soul religion must satisfy; and let us first take the testimony of conscience, by which I here mean the human heart.

Every one that enters into himself and gives himself a searching examination finds in his heart and life a void that nothing here can fill. The happiness that this world offers him is insufficient. Neither the gratification of the senses nor the higher pleasures of intellectual pursuits nor the blessed joys of legitimate affection nor the substantial enjoyment of performed duty can quench all the thirst of the soul. Having come from God and being made in his image, man can live happy only in God. He aspires after him by all the faculties of his being. His intellect seeks him as the light without which all is darkness, his heart as the supreme object of its affections, his conscience as the support and sanction that it needs. So long as man has not found God he cannot taste true happiness.

But let us examine at shorter range and see what is implied in this need of God which distinguishes man from all other creatures.

Man needs to know God. It is not enough for him to know that there is a God; he must also

know what God is. "Chimerical pretension!" say some. "The Eternal and the Infinite will always remain inaccessible to finite beings like ourselves." This is true enough; man can never hope to gain that absolute, adequate knowledge that the infinite God alone can have of himself. In many directions God remains inaccessible to us, and our hearts do not yearn after the incomprehensible attributes of God. Indeed, man's mind would not be satisfied with a God whom his intellectual compass could gauge. Such a God could not be a real God to us.

But if in some respects the nature of God transcends our knowledge, there are sides of his nature by which he can be known of us. I refer to those moral attributes that we bear in our own natures and by which we are of "the family of God." Through these God is accessible to us, and on account of them our souls thirst after God. I need to know that God is good, that he is just, that he is holy; I need to know what his will is concerning me. Does he care for me? Does he love me? Will he answer me if I call upon him? Can I depend upon his tender care when in distress? Is he my Judge as well as my Father, and will he require of me some day an account of all the deeds of my life?

My conscience answers all these questions in

the affirmative; and many external voices confirm this testimony of my conscience. Nature and the facts of history reveal a God full of wisdom and love who cares for even the least of his creatures, who renders unto each according to his work, and who by no means clears the guilty. But, on the other hand, how many things in the world seem to accuse God's justice and belie his love! What disorders in nature, what scandals in history; what undeserved sufferings, what crimes unpunished! What shall we say of death and so many heart-rending occurrences that sometimes put upon our lips this word, "There is no God"? Who will reconcile these contradictory testimonies? Who will remove the difficulties produced by the presence of evil in the world and in man?

But let God himself speak. Let him teach us what he is and what he requires of us. Let him instruct and reassure us. Let him give us evidences of his love and his justice strong enough to dispel every objection and every doubt. This is the cry of man's heart. To know God, to see and hear him more clearly and distinctly than he is seen and heard in nature and history, is the first great need of our soul. Nor is it because of a vain curiosity or the proud ambition of our intellect that we desire to know God, but it is in

order to possess him and unite ourselves to him. Union with God and communion with him—this is the second object of our soul's aspiration after God; this is what constitutes the very essence of religion.

How can this communion with God be realized? Through obedience and love, answers our conscience. To obey the law that God has graven upon our hearts, to love what God loves, and to will what he wills, these are the essential conditions of a religious life. To accomplish some abstract principle like that of duty is not sufficient for the religious man; he must obey some one. In doing good he must feel himself in accord with Him who is the good realized in a living person. In addition to this testimony of his conscience man needs the approbation of God. To do God's will and feel conscious of his approbation, to love and be loved by him, to walk with him, to make him the centre and object of our life—this is the ideal of the religious soul, this is true religion.

But no sooner has man a glimpse of this ideal than he feels his inability to attain it. His conscience accuses him. He is conscious of having violated that law graven within himself and which is a reflector of God's will. In addition to actual transgression he discovers within himself a clearly defined disposition to do evil rather than good.

Underlying actual transgression there resides corruption; back of sins is sin—an organic and profound disease that holds our entire moral being and paralyzes all our energy.

Man, then, is separated from God by an impassable abyss; for what communion can exist between holiness and sin? It is impossible for man to cross this great gulf. And yet he feels that union with God is not only his duty, but that therein rests his only hope of supreme happiness. Hence the painful conflict that every man bears in himself; he desires to hold communion with God, but sin stands between them as an impassable barrier. Man aspires after God; and because his knowledge of him is insufficient, it is necessary that God reveal himself to him in a clearer, more direct way. Such is the testimony of our conscience; such is also the testimony of history, wherein is manifested the conscience of mankind. History everywhere attests this human need of God by showing us the existence of religious forms everywhere. Whatever degree of civilization the peoples of the earth have attained, they have a religion and corresponding institutions and ceremonies. If we examine these various religions we shall find certain general or universal traits in all of them that clearly establish the fact that thirst after God is a universal trait of mankind. One of

the first things taught us by history is the belief among mankind, everywhere and in all ages, in supernatural manifestations by which the gods communicate with men and make known their intentions to them. In general, a particular caste, the priests, have charge of these manifestations. Charged by the people with the duty of consulting the gods, these priests transmit to the people whatever oracles these deities may see fit to send. Sometimes sacred books are used wherein the gods have inscribed their will. At other times the gods themselves have come down to live among men, and have made themselves known and have given their laws. But under all these different forms we discover the same thing, namely, a revelation from above attempting to teach men what they need to know in order to fulfil their destiny.

In connection with this we find another fact. As there is no religion without some supernatural communication, so there is no religion without priests and sacrifices. And what are priests but mediators between heaven and the earth? And again, what does this mediation imply but that an abyss separates sinful man from the unseen and mysterious Power upon which man is dependent, and that this abyss must be closed up before man can hold communion with God? Men in all ages

and in all climes have been conscious of their unworthiness to present themselves before the divinity and that the incense offered by their impure hands could not be acceptable to him whom they desired to serve. Hence they have chosen some of their number whom they have set apart from themselves as if to remove them from the universal corruption of the world; and these chosen and select few, after having purified themselves, have assumed the office of presenting to the deity the services of their brethren which these felt themselves unworthy to offer. Now the essential function of the priesthood is the offering of sacrifices. Some sacrifices are acts of adoration and thanksgiving, while others are bloody expiations. There is a voice of the human conscience in the blood that sprinkles every altar. This voice emphatically proclaims that man thus offering sacrifices acknowledges himself guilty before God and deserving his wrath. It proclaims, too, that man cannot hope to placate God by his feeble tears, but that a profound act of expiation is needed. So, also, places consecrated to the service of God proclaim the same fact, that is, man's conscience recognizing man's guilt. The priesthood, sacrifices, and temples are so many institutions found among mankind inspired by the same sentiment and teaching the same lesson, to wit, that man is

guilty before God and that he needs propitiation before he is fit to appear in His presence. They attest, at the same time, his guilt and his hope of having this guilt blotted out and being restored to God's favor which he has lost.

The religious institutions of all nations, then, as well as every man's conscience, show us at the bottom of every human soul the felt need of a positive revelation from God and of a reparation of some sort that will reëstablish between heaven and earth the relations so profoundly disturbed by sin. It is this double need of mankind that Christianity supplies. Christianity is summed up in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is the revealer of God and the express image of his person. Jesus teaches what we need to know concerning God and our eternal destiny—what neither nature nor history nor human conscience can teach us. It is he who reveals to us the Father in heaven, the Father who has not ceased to love his rebellious children, and who does not take pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that all should return unto him and live.

But Jesus Christ does more even than this. He is not only the greatest of all teachers, he is himself the truth. In him the invisible things have become visible, heaven has come down to earth; the unseen God, from whom a great gulf separates

us and whom nature conceals while giving us glimpses of him, has come near us. He has suited himself to our weak state to such a degree that he was seen of our eyes and touched of our hands. From age to age humanity had repeated the cry of Philip, "Show us the Father," and to this cry Jesus answers, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Henceforth all that is required in order to see God is to open the eyes and see. The unseen God whom the heathen worshipped, he whom the philosophers despaired of finding in the infinite limits of space, he is there moving and acting before our eyes. Behold Jesus! In his person and life we shall see shining with resplendent light holiness and love, and by the splendor of that heavenly light we shall recognize that God whom we had so long and so vainly sought.

But Jesus is not only the supreme revealer, he is also the supreme mediator. He is primarily this in his incarnation. His person, in which divinity and humanity are united in a living way, fills the gulf that separates us from God. But it is mainly by redemption that Jesus accomplishes that work which every human religion, however crude, pretends to accomplish. Jesus is the true High Priest of humanity; he is its representative before the Father. Raising towards heaven his hands, he intercedes in behalf of the sinner. He

does more than this: he offers himself a sacrifice for sinners, and by that voluntary sacrifice of himself he blots out the sinner's sins. Henceforth that impassable barrier which stood between God and man has disappeared and the way leading from earth to heaven has been opened.

Thus Jesus, in his person and work, alone completely satisfies the human conscience. He is the revealer of God and the author of that reparation that restores to sinners the favor of God. He gives us the reality of which all false religions have but the weakest shadow, and thus he establishes the true religion and founds the true church of God upon the earth.

III.

THUS far we have dealt with our subject in a general way, showing how the two facts of revelation and redemption supply the two fundamental needs of the religious conscience. But this general summary—which we have greatly abbreviated—is not quite sufficient to the end we have in view. We must enter into some details and make our demonstration more complete by showing that each one of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity has its own peculiar importance, from a religious point of view, because they are all related to the

central fact of redemption. For this is not a question of theory, but the very facts and fundamental truths of Christianity.

One of the features of contemporary faith is its incomplete and fragmentary character, a want of clear and definite views of Christian truth, ignorance of those marvellous things that God has revealed to us for the nurture and salvation of our souls. Traces of this ignorance are visible in some of the popular preaching of the day as well as in the daily life of the private Christian. This is one of the chief causes of the declension of the spiritual life of the church. For the weak pulsations of a religious life are necessarily the result of an unsettled, vacillating faith. So if we would restore to the preaching of the Word and the religious life the power that is too often lacking, we must assign to Christian doctrines the place that belongs to them. The religious life of the Christian proceeds from the truth; for the truth is not an abstract idea, but a living power; it is a fact and a personality; it is a redemption and a Redeemer; it is the sum of divine love for the salvation of men; it is the gift of God himself in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. And no part of Christianity is of little worth to the religious life of the disciple. In the realm of grace, as well as in that of nature, God has made nothing useless:

everything that is revealed is helpful to our salvation. To every truth corresponds a grace of which it were folly and ingratitude to deprive ourselves. It behooves us to learn the whole truth; for this truth is a living organism which we cannot mutilate without injury; it is an edifice from which a single stone being taken brings down with it the whole structure. So we may affirm in an important sense that in religion there are no unimportant truths; for these are so closely related to the fundamental truths that they become themselves essential truths. Let us examine this point more minutely.

We said above that Christianity is first of all a revelation and a redemption, and that it thereby corresponds to the imperative needs of the conscience. I would now add that Christianity preserves its religious value only if the person and work of Jesus Christ retain the distinctive character assigned them in the Scriptures. In other words, we affirm that without the mystery of the God-man and without the mystery of the cross there is no real revelation and no real redemption. If Jesus is only a man, superior to others by the purity of his life and the loftiness of his soul; if he is only a prophet commissioned by God with a word of sympathy for us; if he is not the only-begotten Son of God in a unique and absolute sense,

then he is no longer the supreme revealer of the Father whom our souls need. If he was not from the beginning with the Father, if he has not known himself with that perfect knowledge which God alone can have of himself, then he cannot reveal him unto us. If he cannot say in truth, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," then he cannot show us the Father, and something is lacking in the redemption he brings us. Jesus in that case becomes only an intercessor, superior indeed to others and nearer than others to him whom he announces, but who is yet in reality an obstacle between God and man. Now, in order that the religious conscience may be satisfied, it must feel that when before Jesus it is in the presence of God himself, the living and true God, the very object of religion. It must recognize in Jesus him who is not only the means, but the end; not only an index to life, but life itself; not only the revealer, but the object of revelation. For really every mediator separates and hinders even when striving to unite man and God; he conceals while revealing, interferes while helping. The religious soul needs the immediate gift of God in order to unite itself to him.

But the humanity of Jesus Christ is not less necessary in his work of redemption than his divinity. In order to reveal himself to man, God

must come down within our reach; it is necessary that he speak a language that we can understand, and man can understand only when he hears a human voice. This is why God appeared to men in Jesus Christ, as the man of kind and tender heart, as Jesus, who has caused to shine upon earth in a human life all the holiness and love of God. We approach Jesus without fear; for is he not our brother? Is he not like unto us in all things? Does he not say to us with a voice in which our hearts feel genuine human sympathy, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? We go to him, and when we see beyond the simple and unpretentious form all the plenitude of God, we cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" Here is an intimate revelation beyond which nothing is needed, for God gives himself to us in the only way in which we can apprehend him, and he gives himself wholly. It is because he is very God and very man that Jesus is the Redeemer. The work of our redemption cannot be accomplished from without; it must be by a human fact which shall be the counterpart of that of the fall. It is humanity that lost the favor of God in Eden, so humanity must be represented in the return unto the Father. Man brought upon himself through disobedience the wrath of God, so man

must offer unto God the double reparation of obedience and punishment. The Redeemer then must be one of us, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. He must enter fully into the conditions of our moral life; he must be tempted as we are tempted, that he be acquainted with all the trials and struggles of free agents. It is then only that he can offer unto God his perfect obedience in our stead and receive in our stead the chastisement intended for us.

But if the Redeemer must be human like us, he must also be more than human. He must be free from the solidarity of sin that weighs us down so heavily, in order that his work may possess universal favor and be efficacious. The entire human race must, as it were, be incarnate in his person. The stream of humanity must flow back to its source in order to make a new start and flow in a contrary direction. Humanity concentrated in one person must once more become master of its destiny; it must determine itself by an act of free obedience to God's will, as it had formerly determined itself in opposition to God's will by Adam's disobedience. Neither man nor angel can perform so great a mission for humanity. This work can be performed only by him who is at once the creator and the type of man; the perfect image of his person, the eternal Logos, is the ideal

of the moral creature. He was from the beginning, say the Scriptures, the light and life of the world, and man is destined to become like him, to realize the likeness of God as he realizes it himself. It is by virtue of this original relation that the eternal Logos undertakes the cause of fallen man and becomes the second Adam who repairs the ruin caused by the first Adam.

Nor is this all. He that is to represent humanity before God must satisfy two obligations that exclude each other: He must be chastised and obedient at the same time. We must, in fact, unite ourselves to God in obedience and love—this is our duty as men; and we must be separated from him by chastisement—this is our punishment as sinners. But how can we love a God whom we recognize as displeased with us, how unite ourselves to one whose presence we dread? Jesus alone, because he is free from all pollution, because he is the Son of God, the eternal delight of the Father, is able to render unto God the obedience and love that we owe. He alone, too, can offer unto God as an acceptable offering his holy life and his voluntary sufferings. A Christ, at the same time son of man and Son of God, can alone, therefore, be our Saviour. He is, too, the only God that the human soul yearns after in its present condition. To accompany us through this earthly

pilgrimage, such as sin has made it for us, to console us in our painful hours of discouragement and trial, and to strengthen us in times of temptation, we need a God in whom we find at once a Brother and a God. We need in heaven a Brother who understands our sufferings, having himself suffered like unto us, who has wept as we weep, who has known by experience the weaknesses of the flesh and the terrible onslaughts of temptation, one who has lived our life and travelled the same difficult road of the religious life that we are obliged to travel in order to reach the realms of bliss at God's right hand. For how could we carry our burdens to a God who inhabits heaven and is as inaccessible to pain as he is to sin? We might seem to be speaking to him in an unknown tongue and of things the full force of which he could not feel: is it not better to be silent than to speak and not be understood? But with what freedom and confidence we can pour the burdens of our hearts into the heart of Jesus! Is he not the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? Is he not, by actual experience, acquainted with our physical and moral sufferings? Are we not sure that in him we shall find an ever-ready sympathy and consolation, always sufficient to our troubles? We not only need the sympathy of a Brother, we also need the assistance of God. What an incomparable priv-

ilege to find these two things united in one and the same person! What security and what joy there is in knowing that by the side of the Brother who can always sympathize with us there is also, in Jesus Christ, God who can always deliver us! It is not in vain that the apostle calls the mystery of Jesus "the mystery of godliness."

What is true of the mystery of godliness is also true of the mystery of the cross. The preaching of the cross is to the spirit of the worldling foolishness. Now we cannot take away from the cross this foolishness without taking away from Christianity its religious power. For what, in fact, remains of Christianity if you subtract from it the preaching of the cross? Nothing but the example of Jesus. That this example has a large religious value is not denied. To listen to the words of Jesus and contemplate his holy life is a great advantage to the soul that is religiously inclined; but it is not enough. If Jesus offers us only his sinless example, then the gospel, instead of being the good news, becomes, like the law, an instrument of condemnation and death. For, indeed, what are the requirements of the law of Moses compared with the lofty demands of the law of the gospel and the ideal and perfect holiness that shines in the life of Jesus? This perfect holiness would only cause us to become more thoroughly

discouraged and overwhelmed by the greatness of our sins and our utter helplessness. It is not enough that Jesus point to us the way and that he himself walk therein in our presence: we need a Saviour to help us walk in the way of holiness. What would it avail a sick man to show him a healthy person and say to him, "There, do like him!" What is true of physical disease is also true of moral disease. Contemplation is not sufficient to heal it. As the sick person needs an efficacious remedy, so the sinner needs pardon and deliverance, and it is by suffering for us upon the cross that Jesus Christ brings us pardon and deliverance. The expiation of Jesus upon the cross blots out our sins and breaks the chains that kept us hopelessly separated from God.

The necessity of expiation is frequently overlooked and even slightly spoken of in this age. The pretence is put forth that in order to pardon the sinner God has no need of so many intricacies, and that the doctrine of expiation offends both reason and conscience. But I affirm that without expiation pardon from God is impossible; and I believe that this is also the affirmation of the human conscience, which is fully satisfied only at the foot of the cross. But let us see. What, in fact, does the conscience proclaim? It affirms, in the first place, that the moral law cannot exist

without a sanction; that to violate that law is to offend its Author; that God cannot consider the guilty as innocent without ceasing to be God; and that he can pardon the sinner only after a reparation has been made sufficient to preserve the rights of justice and law. Conscience itself never pardons. It pronounces on sin an irrevocable sentence: the sentiment that there is in sin something irreparable always accompanies the recollection of sin. This is what gives remorse its keenest edge, and there is nothing in the world more inexorable than remorse of conscience. It is the vulture of Prometheus bound to its prey always alive. It is the worm that dieth not, the fire that is never quenched. The tears of repentance are not sufficient to dispel the anxiety of conscience: there must be expiation; and this is why, as we have seen, all religions have their expiatory rites.

The cross of Christ satisfies these profound instincts of the conscience. In Christ crucified humanity has at last found that perfect expiation which it had in vain sought to offer unto God. On Calvary has been offered the true sacrifice, the one offering: the sacrifice and the victim sacrificed are equally holy; and this sacrifice itself has a moral value that the ancient sacrifices did not possess: it is at once a voluntary offering and a satisfaction rendered to divine justice. In immo-

lating himself for us Jesus has satisfied the divine law by paying for us the debt of obedience and punishment that is held against us. All his life was a long expiation and obedience; but it is on Golgotha that obedience and love have been made perfect. Jesus died upon the cross in order that God might be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth. This is the only pardon that can satisfy conscience. It would protest against a pardon that would lower or weaken divine law and that would thereby attack divine holiness. The holy God to whom our conscience appeals can forgive the sinner only by punishing sin.

Pardon begins for us a new life. God having made our hearts free, we can walk in the way of his commandments. The power of sin having been vanquished, we are born into the glorious liberty of the children of God and are made capable of loving and serving him. Such is the redeeming virtue of the cross; but it is not the only virtue, for it has also on other accounts an incomparable religious value. There is in the cross of Christ a complete revelation. There is first a revelation of man. "The religion that man needs," says Pascal, "is a religion that at once humbles and elevates him, that makes him feel his misery and his greatness." The cross reveals to us our degradation and greatness, the great

value of our nature and the deep abyss into which we have fallen. What must be the worth of the human soul, if, in order to save it, God has given his only-begotten Son! So, too, what must be the profound sinfulness of sin if the Son of God was sacrificed in order to blot out its stain! We may be permitted to be emphatic at this point, for wherein contemporary religion is most defective is in the sentiment of the sinfulness of sin. Accustomed as we are to live in the very midst of sin, the atmosphere which we breathe is so impregnated with it that finally we come to ignore its sinfulness. Men plead for it as a weakness, an inevitable legacy of human nature, and they imagine that God excuses it as they do. Holding such views, men cease contending against it and finally surrender to it unconditionally the empire of their hearts. Now there is nothing in the world so well adapted to give us just views and a proper estimate of sin as a look at the cross. Is not the condemnation of the just and holy One the great masterpiece of human wickedness? Is it not the crime that contains all crimes and that shows to what extent wickedness will go? And when the Word of God teaches us what mystery is wrought upon the cross, when it tells us it was for our sins that the Son of God endured such sufferings and ignominy, we understand, as we never

understood before, what sin is in the sight of God. We see with what severity God judges it and with what vigor he condemns it. Never, in fact, have the judgments of God against sin been pronounced with so much rigor. Neither when our first parents were driven from Eden, nor when the entire earth was engulfed by the deluge, nor when the fire from heaven burned up the cities did God's judgments come with greater fury. In the cross there is more than the punishment of guilt, more than the destruction of the world—there is the agony, the death, of the Son of God.

But the cross is not only a revelation of man, his greatness and his fall; it is also the most sublime revelation of God. In the cross we behold the holy God. We see especially the God who is love. After Golgotha it is impossible to doubt that God is love. See Rom. 8:35-39. And let us observe in what a striking manner God's love is manifested upon the cross. It reveals itself by suffering, sacrifice, that is, by what love has that is most persuasive and most touching. Without the cross something seems to be wanting needful for love's finding its way into our hearts. Giving one's self away, sacrificing one's self for the one we love, constitute the very essence of love. We know that God does not give himself away. But by a supreme miracle God has found a way

of giving us an irresistible proof of his love: he delivers for us his own Son, and shows by the greatness of his gift to what an extent he has loved us.

This love of God towards us, manifested upon the cross, provokes our love for him. Why should we not love a God who has so loved us? How refuse any service to one who has given for us his only Son? In return for such a love we shall give him our hearts; to his cause our lives shall be consecrated. Here is shown with force the religious value of the doctrines of Christianity. God causes us to love him by his first having loved us; and loving God, is not this the fulfilling of the law, is it not all of religion? The cross also teaches us to love our fellow-men. It is from the rock of Calvary that has started that stream which has flowed during eighteen centuries over the world, carrying everywhere the alleviation, not only of physical suffering, but also of moral suffering. Men may say that the doctrines of the cross are foolishness, but let them not say that they are barren; for history and the experience of man for eighteen centuries are there to contradict it.

Let us briefly notice the religious value of other Christian doctrines that have either been ignored or denied. The resurrection of Jesus has

been considered of no religious importance. On the contrary, we deem it of the very greatest importance and value to our religious life. It is one of the great facts of Christianity, with which it either stands or falls. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, then nothing remains of his person or his work. If he did not rise from the dead, he is not the Son of God. If the grave retained him in its embrace, then he is not the Prince of life. If he remained as other men, the prey of the tomb, then he is as other men. Nay, he has lost his right to our confidence and respect, for he passed himself for what he was not. He had said, I am the Son of God; no man taketh away my life from me: I have power to lay it down and power to take it again. He had solemnly proclaimed on several occasions that he would rise on the third day; and if he did not rise, then the facts give a flat contradiction to his words. Was he himself deceived or did he deceive others? Must we accuse him of hallucination or falsehood? But if Jesus is a visionary dreamer, how explain the sublime lessons contained in his sublime reveries? If he is an impostor, how can we believe in that ideal purity with which his brow is crowned? If Jesus is not risen from the dead, he is no longer the man whose moral perfection has never been equalled or surpassed; for every man whose judg-

ment is sound and whose conscience is keen is morally superior to him. The same cause that would bring him down from the high pedestal on which the faith of the church has always beheld him would also bring him down from the high place that even those have assigned him who do not believe in him. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, then he is not the Redeemer; all his work is vain and we are still under the bondage of sin. It is sin that gives death its power, for death is the wages of sin. If, therefore, Jesus has remained in the grave, the signification is that there was no expiation for sin upon the cross. It still exists; the burden is still upon us with all its force and it still brings upon our heads the wrath of God, and nothing remains for us to do but to bewail our vain hope and seek in another saviour the restoration to God's favor which Jesus vainly attempted to accomplish for us. On the other hand, the whole situation is changed if Jesus Christ is really risen from the dead as he said he would. God has accepted the sacrifice of Calvary: Jesus is in very truth he that taketh away the sins of the world. Henceforth reparation has been made for all the consequences of sin, and man has been pardoned and has found the favor of God and communion with him.

But pardon is not all of salvation. It is not

enough that we are delivered from the curse and slavery of sin; we must also be regenerated and sanctified. A Saviour whose work would cease with blotting out our past and who would leave us helpless and alone for the future—in our weakness to complete the work of our sanctification—would not save us to the uttermost. We need a Saviour who, after having saved us, can also sanctify us; a Saviour ever present with us, who will constantly stand at our side in temptation to uphold us lest we fall and to give us each day strength for the present. Now, a Saviour dead and in the grave cannot be such a helper. To lead and help us through this life we need a living Saviour, clothed with the power of God, a Saviour such as the Gospels represent Jesus—risen from the dead the third day and ascended up to heaven, where he sitteth at God's right hand to make intercession for us.

The resurrection is thus the warrant of our resurrection, and as such, too, this doctrine has an incontestable religious value. In the midst of the vicissitudes and turmoils of this life man needs consolation and hope. So most religious and philosophical systems promise him a future life, where all the disorders of this present life shall be harmonized and where he will taste that perfect happiness which he seeks in vain in this

present world. But what could be more vague and futile than the future existence offered man by the religious systems of antiquity? How vain are such perspectives to dispel the terror that death brings to the human heart! Instead of this problematic and cloudy immortality, Christianity gives us clear, definite promises and living realities. It reveals to us by a clear fact of history our future destiny. Jesus Christ has shown himself upon the earth what we shall be in heaven. He is the celestial Man, whose image we shall bear just as we have borne the image of the terrestrial man. We, too, shall break the stone of this sepulchre and shall put on a body like unto the body of our glorified Redeemer.

Who can properly estimate the value of this glorious hope? Ask some Christian who has been bereft of some beloved friends; he will answer you that it is a supreme consolation for him to know that he will, some day, meet them again and know them as he once knew them, that he will again see them with his own eyes. Inquire of those who have been acquainted with physical suffering, and they will reply that they have felt their burdens becoming lighter and easier when they learned that they would exchange these poor weak bodies for bodies of eternal youth, inaccessible to the pangs of sickness or pain. These per-

spectives which Christianity gives us here below are needed to keep up our hearts and feed our courage. A religion without hope and promise would not be a true religion.

It is not, of course, within the limits of a brief article like this that this vast subject can be exhaustively treated. One more doctrine must suffice—the Trinity. It is claimed that this doctrine is inadmissible from a philosophical point of view. But, on the other hand, the doctrine of the trinity seems to us to possess a high religious value. Let it first be understood that by the trinity is not meant any particular theory, but the clear and indisputable revelation of a fact of Scripture. God reveals himself as the Father who has created us, the Son who redeems us, and the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us; and to this triple or triune revelation of God corresponds a mysterious plurality that makes of him the living God, the God-man, and the God-love.

The knowledge of this fact is not indifferent to our religious life. It is implied in the plan of salvation, and without it everything becomes doubtful and uncertain. The work of redemption implies a redeemer. The plan of salvation could be conceived by divine love, but could not be realized in history except on condition that some one existed to execute it. What would have be-

come of this plan if the God-man had not been there, the only one able to carry it into complete execution? The good-will of the Father towards us would have been vain if from the beginning the Son had not been there to say to the Father, "Behold, I come to do thy will."

So too the work of our sanctification implies a sanctifier, a Spirit capable of acting upon our spirits; a Spirit of light that enlightens our hearts and makes accessible to them the things that are not revealed to the carnal heart; a Spirit of holiness that transforms our hearts, inclines our wills, and becomes in us the principle of a new life; finally, a Spirit that reveals unto us the Son as the Son reveals to us the Father, and who communicates unto us all the riches of grace. The doctrine of the trinity is thus intimately and vitally identified with our religious life from its very birth.

But more than this. The doctrines of Scripture are the only sure foundation for the belief in a living and personal God, without whom—even our adversaries recognize this fact—no religious life is possible. Outside of Christian revelation the soul is doomed to incessant oscillation between deism, which is the negative of the living God, and pantheism, which is the negative of a personal God. Some have imagined they could steer clear of this double difficulty by making the world

itself the eternal object of divine activity. Then in that case God would cease to be self-sufficient, for he could no more do without the world than the world could do without him. God would then realize and complete himself in the universe, and this is pantheism. Alone the God of the Scriptures can do without the world, because he contains in his own essence the mystery of life and love. Alone, too, he is the Creator in the true sense of the word. If he creates, it is not in order to obey a necessity of his nature, but it is by an act of freedom. The universe is not the eternal and necessary expression of divine life, for God has in himself his perfect manifestation, his living image; the eternal LOGOS is a miracle of goodness, not of necessity. And hence nature, the product of divine freedom, is not to this freedom a limit and an obstacle; it is in God's hand a docile instrument. There is room in the universe and in history for the free intervention of God's love. The supernatural of revelation is but the logical result of the supernatural of creation. Now what is indispensable to a religious life is a God, the Creator and sovereign Master of the universe; a God who is not fettered by the laws which he has made, but who is distinct from the world and superior to it, who is able to intervene in the world in behalf of his creatures.

In closing let me call attention to a double fact which strikingly justifies the theme at the head of this paper. First, the New Testament everywhere exhibits the closest union between religious life and the mysteries of Christianity. Nothing could be less theological or savor less of speculation than the writings of the apostles. They always view things from the practical side and are invariably concerned with the Christian life and its growth in the soul. To encourage them that suffer, correct them that wander, lift up them that have fallen, urge upon all daily vigilance and charity as the fruits of faith, this is the first aim of their pens. But as it is faith that produces work, as truth precedes life, they do not hesitate to ascend from consequences to principles, and they base all their practical exhortations upon the doctrines of Christianity. To show this fully we would have to quote the entire New Testament. A few examples must suffice. The apostle Paul, exhorting the early Christians to the practice of humility and charity, urges them to take upon themselves the spirit that was in Christ, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a

man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Phil. 2:5-8. The same apostle, pressing upon us the duty of consecrating our lives to God's service, makes use of these words: "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." 2 Cor.

5:15. The apostle Peter, in order to induce us to continue with vigor the war against sin, recalls to our minds at what infinite cost the forgiveness of our sins has been obtained. He says,

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

1 Pet. 1:18, 19. And the apostle John, putting into a single line all of Christian life and doctrine and the intimate bonds that unite them, exclaims, "We love him because he first loved us."

1 John 4:19. The conclusions that are most closely impressed with dogmatic teaching are invariably concluded by the application of the same to the religious life of the believer. So Paul, after having expounded the entire plan of salvation and unfolded its various phases in human history, exclaims, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present

your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. 12:1. And in another place, after having unfolded the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead and opened to our view the perspectives of the future world, he adds, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58. Even the definitions that we find in the Scriptures are turned to practical account by the sacred writers as bearing upon our religious life. St. John says, "God is light," and he immediately adds, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." 1 John 1:6. These citations from the Scriptures might be multiplied indefinitely, and everywhere we would find the Scriptures presenting the great doctrines of faith as the foundation of our peace with God and the principles of Christian life. Hence we may affirm that in the eyes of the apostles Christian life is Christian doctrine applied to our everyday life; it is the miracles of grace producing in the Christian life the miracles of charity. This testimony of the New Testament the voice of history corroborates as a matter of fact. It is the foolishness of the cross that has conquered

and transformed the world. When Christians have most implicitly believed in the cross they have astonished the world by the holiness of their lives. But when faith in the great evangelical doctrines of Christianity has become weak or altered in the church, the religious life of believers has correspondingly languished and religious life itself has lost its hold upon the human conscience. This is a fact that is as conspicuous in history as the light of the sun at high noon. The declension of religious life has invariably been preceded by the declension and weakness of faith in the doctrines of Christianity. The more dim the person and the cross of Jesus have become to the human heart, the more pale and feeble piety and charity in the church have become. We may affirm without fear of successful contradiction that the weakness or strength of religious life in the church of Christ corresponds with the weak or strong faith in the doctrines of Christianity.

From what precedes we are justified in this conclusion: To weaken or mutilate the doctrines of Christianity is to weaken or mutilate religious life. All that men subtract from the mystery of God's love manifested upon the cross they subtract at the same time from the peace of conscience and happiness of the Christian believer.

Let us, then, from every housetop, affirm the

doctrines of Christianity. Let there be no subtraction or evasion, but let us affirm the doctrines of Christianity *entire*. They are just as true to-day as when Jesus gave them forth, and just as much needed now as they were then. What this age needs, what the church needs, is not a diluted Christianity, fashioned after the supposed taste of contemporary thought, but a Christianity with all its angles and all the foolishness of the cross; for that is the only Christianity that convicts of sin and saves the soul: a Christianity never new, never old, that has saved all the redeemed now in heaven; a Christianity that does not scare at shadows, but, taking its two *foci* in sin and redemption, takes the sinner through the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ to present him spotless in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

UNITY OF FAITH

A PROOF

OF THE

Divine Origin and Preservation
of Christianity.

BY

REV. JOHN STOUGHTON, D. D.

ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

THE design of this tract is to show the large measure of unity which exists in the hearts and thoughts of Christians, notwithstanding manifold differences and controversies, and the large measure of agreement to be found in the creeds of Christendom from the earliest to the latest periods in church history. The evidence of this agreement in relation to the Unity and Fatherhood of God, the condition of man, the doctrine of Christ, the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, salvation by faith, the future or "the last things," also the authority of Scripture, in the formulated doctrines of the various branches of the professing church, is examined. The records of experience in Christian biography and the expression of deep convictions and desires among believers of every name in Christian hymns are also noticed; and the conclusion is reached that having regard to the acceptance of Christianity by people of every race, the unique and peculiar character of the fundamental truths of Christianity, the unparalleled character of its literature, the diverse idiosyncrasies of race and individual character, and the natural aversion of the human heart to the truths of the gospel, nothing but the teaching of the Holy Spirit can account for the unity of faith which exists and has existed from the beginning. It is shown also how the New Testament anticipated what has actually occurred.

UNITY OF FAITH.

THE divisions of Christendom are sadly manifest. Eastern and Western, Lutheran, Calvinistic, and other churches are encompassed by dense clouds of controversy. It might have been conjectured that there would be manifest and indisputable agreement among Christ's followers; but actual history differs from ideal ones. Many therefore turn from Christianity with distrust, in some cases with aversion. Yet, looking at human nature, differences of opinion in this department of human thought seem inevitable, since no subjects of an intellectual kind can be excluded from the domain of free discussion except mathematical axioms and demonstrations. If no varieties of conclusion existed in religious history, such a fact would be made an objection to the thing itself, as inimical to all liberty of investigation, as crushing mental activity, as mechanically stereotyping the ideas of its disciples. The very controversies charged upon it, and which are, it must be confessed, too often conducted on principles and in a

spirit which good men deplore, at any rate bear witness to it as a power which has stirred humanity to the utmost and called forth the exercise of its faculties with preëminent vigor.

The most striking points of difference, at least those which first attract the notice of superficial observers, relate to ecclesiastical questions and forms of worship. What constitutes a Christian church? What is the true order of the ministry? What distinctions are there in its offices? What relations ought to be maintained between its institutions and secular society? What are the sacraments which Christ ordained for the benefit of his people? What is the Scriptural mode of service in the house of God, liturgical or extempore, ritualistic or simple? What is the best method of working out practically the religious and benevolent purposes of the gospel? these are questions which have been and are obviously in dispute between the different sections of ancient and modern Christendom. But underneath these contentions in a multitude of cases may be found an agreement in fundamental beliefs of doctrine as properly distinguishable from organization and observances. Happily, many members of all churches are essentially one in these convictions. Besides, they heartily unite to circulate those Scriptures to which they alike appeal as the ground of their

faith—conscious submission to the authority of the Bible being a vital bond of union. Further, they can heartily and zealously coöperate in the diffusion of Christian and healthy literature on a large variety of subjects.

But after all there remain many points of doctrinal diversity, and with these we propose to deal, showing that a large amount of united belief lies in the centre of theological divergencies.

A formal creed, some may think, was desirable at the opening of the Christian era. No such creed, however, can be found; for what is generally called "the Apostles' Creed" is composed of elementary statements gathered from different authors, who indeed wrote under the influence of apostolic teaching, and have given us the substance of historical and doctrinal truth handed down from the earliest date; but the document now so often devoutly repeated was not composed by the inspired twelve in the form in which it has come down to the present day. That creed however is generally acknowledged by the Christian church, and is a basis of union inestimably precious. No one who was present at the Evangelical Conference of New York in 1873 can ever forget the effect produced by the repetition of those simple and beautiful words by representatives of evangelical churches of America, Europe,

Africa, and Asia. A creed more elaborate and of minuter detail, if framed at the beginning, would not have secured perfect unanimity of opinion in particulars of minor description any more than the Bible itself has done. Some diversities of thought are inevitable. No formal creed, no comprehensive and professedly strict organization, has ever produced mental uniformity. It never can. Truth has many sides; and before the canon of Scripture was settled various aspects of truth came before individual minds, and partial apprehensions were natural results. They would carry a lasting influence; and this fact, in connection with differences of race and of idiosyncrasy, as well as the influence of education and other circumstances, had a tendency to produce, to a greater or less extent, varieties of impression. In history, in science founded on observation, and in all departments of metaphysical philosophy, antagonisms arise; and though the Holy Spirit is promised to lead the church into all truth, for purposes of holiness, for growth in grace, for the quickening of divine life, there is nothing in that promise to warrant the expectation that communities and individuals will all agree in the mental perception of every subject included within the range of divine teaching.

Theological differences on some points and *reli-*

gious unity as to main principles are quite compatible. Theological differences are chiefly intellectual, but religious unity is spiritual and moral, having more to do with the heart and will than with the understanding and reason. There is after all far more unity amid diversities of theological opinion than is apparent to those who are not largely acquainted with the history and inner life of Christendom. A vast unity, lying in the depths of sanctified souls, is beautifully revealed as we read memoirs of men belonging to different denominations. Some grand truths, which they have laid hold of with a firm grip, were perhaps little expected to be seen in these letters and diaries; hence they have awakened surprise in readers who had only heard of them as identified with communities separate from their own. The old saying that "blood is thicker than water" has been verified as Christians have recognized a kinship of spiritual life in those whom they had ignorantly imagined as being "strangers and foreigners." Further than that, there is in intellectual apprehensions of doctrine more of approximation, more of real resemblance, than at first is visible. Divisions are apparent at a glance; but deeper inquiry, more patient study, brings to light fundamental agreements, at the sight of which much that before stood out forbiddingly within the

sphere of critical vision melts away, if not into invisibility, yet into comparative insignificance. Many a dispute which has agitated what is called the religious world, when calmly looked at is found to have originated in ambiguity of language, it may be in the different meanings of the same word.

A special value should be attached to unity of faith between different religious fellowships. It is of much more worth, it tells much more powerfully in argument, than myriads of subscriptions to the same articles and untold repetitions of the same creed.

A free acceptance of certain views founded on personal conviction is utterly different from a formal consent arising merely from the imposition of ecclesiastical authorities. The former is precious, and is a witness for the truth professed; the latter is utterly worthless, and proves nothing.

It is our purpose to point out in this tract an existent unity of faith, and to place it side by side with differences—the very darkness which it serves to bring out by force of contrast increases the radiance of the light—and at the end to show how this unity bears upon the evidence of the gospel being of divine origin. As we proceed, let it be remembered that *contrasts* are not always *contradictions*, and that what seems at first like

opposition may be found to be simply the effect of looking at the same thing on *opposite* sides. Moreover, in comparing past and present opinions, account must be taken of the progress of Christian thought. The Word of God liveth and abideth for ever. Like its Author, it knoweth no variableness nor shadow of turning.

“The Holy Scripture contains within itself all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, but only renders up those treasures by little and little as they are needed and asked for.”*

“It was a necessity—a hard, iron, unavoidable necessity—that made men in the times of Arius and Pelagius, of Tetzels and Voltaire, to search the treasures which the body of Christ has received stored up in the Bible; the Spirit of truth, always at work, was especially working at times like those, leading the disciples of our Lord of later date further into the realms of that truth of which Christ possesses the master key.”†

The canon of Scripture was closed with the last inspired writer of the New Testament. It is absurd to suppose that the truth embodied in the sacred books can undergo any alteration. A *growth* in Scripture itself is inconceivable. A *germination* of divine seeds dropped into human

* Trench's "Hulsean Lectures," 1845, No. 8.

† Swainson on the "Creeds," p. 99.

minds and hearts—that is something essentially different, though often thoughtlessly confounded with the former. The labors of learned and thoughtful men in the investigation of the Bible must never be imagined to have gone for nothing. Students have dug under the surface, they have driven shafts into mines of wondrous wealth, they have brought to the surface “gold and silver and precious stones,” and we of the nineteenth century have grown richer in divine stores through sanctified human toil. “Other men labored, and we have entered into their labors.” The abiding Comforter was promised to lead Christ’s disciples into all truth; and studies through nineteen centuries, devoutly pursued by those in whom this Spirit has dwelt, yield results in which we should rejoice. When the mind of the church has been ripened to accept certain formulated results of study, when large numbers of Christians are led to recognize truths deduced from divine oracles, a proof of divine guidance is to be found in the adaptation of such results to the needs and the aspirations of advancing time as well as in their general correspondence with the teachings of Holy Writ.

I.

THE UNITY AND FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

TRUE conceptions on these subjects must be at the basis of all religion.

There is in human nature a desire to pass beyond material facts. It says—and though the languages be many the meaning is one—“There is something beyond what I see and hear and touch, something invisible, mightier than winds and waters, more glorious than sun, moon, and stars. It must have a life infinitely above my own.” And what means this deeply-seated conviction but that the natural is related to the supernatural; that the latter is as true and real as the former? Nature is not the sum total of existence. Throughout historic time in all discovered lands an idea such as we have now indicated lies hidden in the soul of man, or rather is expressed in forms manifold and varied. The most barbarous tribes believe in a power superior to nature’s forces, above the rain clouds, high up in the heaven of heavens. The dreams of Eastern nations tell of mysterious abodes and beings beyond the sight of mortals, and the fantastic imaginings of Norsemen do the same. Greek sages and others discoursed of the absolute, the infinite,

the unchangeable. Mystic pagan thinkers were of old; and still they remain in their ancient lands, bearing testimony to the supernatural. Affecting it is to see men of all climates and ages climbing up, as it were, to look out from the world's loftiest pinnacles upon prospects which baffle every effort of their straining gaze to penetrate the mystery.

Now upon turning from heathendom to Christendom, while a belief in the supernatural is common to both, what a contrast is presented between the conceptions of the supernatural as they obtain in the two cases. The doctrine of one God, a personal Spirit, the Father of men—how this dawns in the beginning of the Bible, and goes on shining “more and more unto the perfect day.” Though in some points which closely touch the central light there are in Christendom diversities of apprehension, yet the remaining consensus of believing thought inspires thankfulness and praise.

Scripture makes all the difference in this respect between pagans and ourselves. The unity of God is the characteristic revelation of the Old Testament. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” Deut. 6:4. The spirituality of his nature was suggested by an absence of visible representations of him in the Holy of holies. It was sublimely declared by Jesus to the woman of

Samaria by Jacob's well, "God is a Spirit," John 4:24; and the divine Fatherhood comes out in answer to Malachi's question, "Have we not all one Father?" Mal. 2:10, more clearly still in the teaching of our Lord's Prayer.

God "the everlasting One," God "a Spirit," God "the Father." So is he recognized in the creeds of Christendom. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" these are opening words in the simplest and most venerable of Christian confessions. "We believe in one God, the Almighty Father, Maker of all things, visible and invisible;" so cry the creeds of Jerusalem, of Cæsarea, and of Antioch in the fourth century, when an age of most violent controversy troubled the Christian church. The same was the united utterance of the fathers at Nicæa (A. D. 325).* Orthodox Greeks still adopt the same symbol. So does the Roman-catholic Church. The first article of the Church of England says, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible."

The Westminster Confession, the Declarations

* Schaff's "Creeds of the Greek and Latin Churches," pp. 28-35.

of Independents and Baptists, the standards of Wesleyanism and other Methodist branches, are of one accord with these patristic utterances; and in communities which put forth no such formularies the faith is just the same.

It is but proper here to notice a recent controversy,* which is an example of agreement in one comprehensive respect, while it is an example of difference in another. Until of late there were no controversies touching the divine Fatherhood; now some difference obtains, yet underneath there is union. Two classes of texts relate to this subject—those which touch a common divine relationship to mankind, and those which touch a peculiar divine relationship to believers. We are all his offspring, said St. Paul, quoting from a Greek poet; our Lord's parable of the prodigal son recognizes the continued Fatherhood of the Almighty to those who have wandered from the Father's house and played the prodigal. On the other hand, we read that to as many as receive "the true Light," "the Word made flesh," to them is given power or authority to "*become* the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

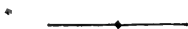
* See "Cunningham Lectures on the Fatherhood of God," by Dr. Candish; and "The Fatherhood of God," by Dr. Crawford.

John 1:12, 13. St. Paul, writing to the Romans, says, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

Some, overlooking or not paying sufficient attention to the latter of these passages, have given undue prominence to the former, and forced them beyond what appears to be their true meaning; others, absorbed in contemplating the special sonship of believers, go so far as to deny the fatherly relation of God to men at large. Both extremes verge on danger; but, after all, when verbal dust has been swept away, there remains this agreement—first, that God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and secondly, that the privilege of "adoption," and the consciousness of it, through the witness of the Spirit, pertain to those, and those only, who are "born again"—"born from above."

Here then, as we have said, we find an instance, and there are many such, in which two sides of revelation are, in theological description, separated from each other. Both are divine, both are true. There is no inconsistency between

them. But, looking on different sides of the divine relationship to His creatures, theologians fall into the mistake of dwelling upon them so as on one side to deduce a formula of doctrine opposed to a formula deduced on the other. Between these two sides of the Scripture shield there is perfect harmony.



II.

THE CONDITION OF MAN.

THE prevalence of evil in the world was obvious ages ago; yet there was no adequate conception of the turpitude of sin, no just estimate of human guilt, and no sufficient apprehension of its consequences, except among those who possessed a divine revelation on the subject. The Jews, as appears from the book of Psalms, had convictions of personal sinfulness such as contemporaries of other races could not feel. Wrongs endured by the latter touched them to the quick; but their own misdoings lay lightly on their consciences. Confessions of sin, sorrows of repentance, and struggles against evil were peculiar to a people who received light from heaven. They were pointed back to the innocence of paradise and to the tragedy of the fall. The New Testament un-

folded still more affecting views of man's wickedness and misery; for He who came to seek and to save that which was lost taught more impressively than had been done before the depth and darkness of the estate from which He worked out full redemption.

The effect of our Lord's revelation of human sin was soon apparent in the church; and the world was startled by outcries of godly sorrow on the part of those who were "pricked to the heart" by apostolic appeals, Acts 2:37; but a deep study of divine teaching on this subject does not appear in early Christian literature. The doctrine of sin did not excite so much attention as the doctrine of salvation. The remedy was received with joy before the healed ones thoroughly examined the fell disorder from which they had been restored. The Greek and Latin fathers differed to some extent in conclusions which they reached while attempting to systematize this part of truth. They formulated ideas as to the extent of mischief which the fall had inflicted, as to the operation of human will in producing evil and in accepting its remedy. Questions arose relative to original sin, and to the initiation in human experience of that redemptive process which is revealed by the gospel. The West went farther than the East in an investiga-

tion of the fall and its effects; and Augustine laid the foundation of doctrines which have ever since more or less marked the theology of European Christendom.

As we place later creeds side by side, we are struck with their resemblance to each other in representing the condition of human beings.

The Lutherans at Augsburg in 1530 declared in their confession that man has free will, and yet has no power to work out the righteousness of God without the Spirit of God. It was chiefly because of the spread of Lutheranism that the Council of Trent held its sittings. But when we turn to a decree on original sin, passed in the fifth session held in 1546, we find the fathers condemning any one who asserts "that the sin of Adam—which in its origin is one, and being transfused into all by propagation, not by imitation, is in each one as his own—is taken away either by the powers of human nature or by any other remedy than the merit of the one Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath reconciled us to God in his own blood, being made unto us justice, sanctification, and redemption."* The Church of England decides in its 19th Article (1563), "That original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, but is the fault and corruption of every

* Schaff's "Creeds of the Greek and Latin Churches," p. 85.

man;" "he is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil;" and "man cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength to good works, faith, and calling upon God."

The Westminster Confession (1647) says, "From original corruption" "do proceed all actual transgressions."* Methodist views on the subject, as taught by John Wesley in his sermons and notes on the New Testament, vary in some respects from the Westminster Confession, but they clearly teach man's fall from original righteousness. Congregationalists, in their Declaration of 1838, professed "They believe that man was created after the divine image, sinless, and in his kind perfect; they believe that the first man disobeyed the divine command, fell from his state of innocence and purity, and involved all his posterity in the consequences of that fall. They believe that, therefore, all mankind are born in sin, and that a fatal inclination to moral evil, utterly incurable by human means, is inherent in every descendant of Adam."†

Some passages bearing on the doctrine of sin in different creeds are not consistent one with

* Schaff's "Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches," p. 616.

† Congregational Year Book.

another. But in substance the statements when impartially interpreted are found to be harmonious. It is to be remembered that in communities where creeds are not professed the fall of man and the sinfulness of all Adam's posterity are acknowledged.

Looking over Christian literature produced in different countries, we discover an immense amount of philosophical speculation pertaining to the department of study now under notice. Divines have pried into every corner of the domain. They have inquired into the meaning and consequences of Adam's fall, into the original constitution of human nature, and into the extent to which sin has affected it. The meaning of the word "depravity" has been turned round and round; exaggerations have been pushed to the extreme by some, and qualifications have been added by the ingenuity of others. The question of liberty has been keenly discussed, and distinctions made between the freedom of *the will* as a distinct faculty in human nature and the freedom of *man* as a personal agent taken altogether. Yet it is from this enormous amount of intellectual activity that we have picked out items just tabulated, from which it appears very remarkable that such a consensus should have existed through so many ages side by side with various differences.

Movements of modern thought have no doubt rudely affected what is called the religious world, and large numbers on the outskirts of Christianity, who tenaciously cling to the Christian name, do not accept such teachings as we have indicated. But it is otherwise with those who are powerfully affected by divine revelation. Many who are indisposed to bow to any one of the creeds just specified, and who object to several of the expressions they contain, have, nevertheless, from reading the Psalms and the Epistles of St. Paul, imbibed sentiments on the subject of sin which are in full accordance with those of evangelical divines in all churches.

III.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

WHAT is called "the Apostles' Creed" gives an outline of the history of Christ rather than the full doctrine respecting him. That doctrine is the subject of apostolic exposition as we find it in the New Testament, and it is throughout based upon facts recorded by the evangelists. The doctrine would be impossible without the facts; the facts would be deficient in meaning without the Epistles. There is unity of belief

among Christians all over the world respecting what we find related of Christ in the oldest Confessions; and the unity of faith as to the doctrine of Christ is far more prevalent still than those who have not studied the records of theological opinion are apt to admit. In order that we may exhibit it as far as it goes, it is necessary to indicate, beyond what we have done in previous sections, certain differences surrounding a central agreement.

The doctrine of Christ includes his divine nature, his human incarnation, and his redemptive work.

1. His divine nature. The exordium of St. John's Gospel places before us in few words the fact of who He was and also what He was. The apostle probably was acquainted with philosophical speculation as to a divine Logos or Word. He did not build his doctrine on those speculations. He received that from his Master and his Master's promised Spirit. Yet he had them in view, we apprehend, when he took up his pen to write the fourth Gospel, and he intended to place the revelation he had received in contrast with imperfect and shadowy dreams of Alexandrian theorists. He authoritatively declares what he knew on the subject. He puts aside mere hypotheses and declares, with a calm

confidence, that there is a true Logos, a Word such as philosophers never dreamed of, a Word divine, real, blessed, speaking to men evermore.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

The source of the utterance warrants full confidence in its authority. Here comes out a fact like the sun, dark with excess of light. The effulgence so dazzles that as we look on the vision we have to shade our eyes.

The Word is divine. “With God,” yea “God” Himself; though with a distinction, He is essentially one with the Fountain of all being, all life. Well might such pregnant phraseology set Christians thinking, laying hold on intellects and hearts year after year, age after age, so that for centuries they could pay attention to little else. Other texts of Scripture they gathered together, and wove into one whole round this oracle—the middlemost of all inspired lessons given them to study. “With God,” they said to themselves—here is distinction. “Was

God," they proceeded to conclude—here is equality. These were the pivots round which the minds of Christian fathers turned for three hundred years. They had little time, little inclination, to dwell on the mystery of sin; they lost themselves in wonder and love as they contemplated this mystery of Christ. Two tendencies of belief appeared early, one rising supremely to the union between "Logos" and "Father," the other resting chiefly on the distinction between the two. "Was God"—there is identity, exclaimed one class. "With God"—there is distinguishableness, exclaimed the other. The two tendencies came into collision at the Nicene crisis. The former tendency overcame the latter. Out of the first came the doctrine of Athanasius; the Son, he said, is of the same substance as the Father. Out of the second came the doctrine of Arius, which denied this co-essence and reduced the Son to the condition of a creature, although very exalted and glorious.

Arius is believed by many competent historical theologians to have been influenced by philosophical speculations derived from heathen sources, then prolific and influential, when he denied what is termed the consubstantiality of the Son—His divine uncreated, co-existent essence. Yet Arius employed most exalted terms

to denote His dignity and glory, and his phraseology at times approaches that of the orthodox.

What Athanasius believed is expressed in the Nicene Creed. All the orthodox, East and West, adopted it. Athanasianism may be said after a sharp struggle to have reigned, but Arianism prevailed for a while over Christendom. It had its divisions, while the Athanasians presented a united front.

Some semi-Arians were less far removed from orthodoxy than others; they would not adopt language which signifies distinctly one substance with the Father; they said they believed the Son was of like substance with the Father. Other Arians lagged far behind.* Metaphysical minds, on both sides of the momentous question, betook themselves to intellectual refinements which the generality of Christians could not fully understand; between them, and indeed among those who were nominally mixed with the semi-Arian ranks, there is historical ground for believing some might be found who accepted Jesus Christ as the divine and only Saviour of mankind. In a very decided spirit, not sacrificing what he believed to be true, the great Athanasius, supported

* The original history of the controversy is supplied by Socrates (A. D. 324-340), Sozomen (324-340), and Theodoret (322-428).

by Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, finally reëstablished the doctrine of our Lord's true and proper divinity.*

2. The incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ is explicitly asserted by the apostle John: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth." John 1:14, R. V.

As the Nicene theologians had devoted themselves to the inquiry, What is the relation of the Word to the Father? so theologians afterwards went on to ask, What is the relation of the human to the divine nature in the person of Christ? How is humanity united to divinity? What is the effect of the union? Where is the centre of personality? Are there two wills or one? Here also divergent tendencies appeared, the first towards a confusion of the human with the divine, the second towards a distinction which separated the human from the divine, so as to make two personalities. The controversy is dreary and nearly unintelligible, and it excited less and less interest as complications which only

* Gibbon acknowledges that the distinctive term employed by Athanasius to denote the divinity of Christ has been "unanimously received as a fundamental article of the Christian faith by the consent of the Greek, the Latin, the Oriental, and the Protestant churches." "Decline and Fall," etc., Milman's Edition, II. p. 203.

Eastern minds could understand hastened the wearisome discussion to its end. Traces of it, however, remain in some Oriental sects.

Greek, Roman, and some Anglican divines regard the orthodox results of these controversies respecting the nature and person of our Lord as the *ne plus ultra* of theological attainment on the subject. Some Americans concur in this opinion. On the contrary, certain acute German thinkers have criticised these formulas as insufficient and are ready to re-open the investigation; whether they will do anything better than their predecessors remains to be seen. In the meanwhile a large number of thoughtful men look upon minute definitions of the union between the Father and the Word and between divinity and humanity as a presumptuous plunge into an unfathomable mystery.

Another kindred point of inquiry has, especially in later times, attracted much attention, namely, that respecting the sense in which we are to take the words of the apostle Paul in Philippians 2:7. In our authorized version we read "made Himself of no reputation," in the Revised Version "emptied Himself," the Greek word being *ἐκένωσε*. Hence the agitation of the question is termed the Kenotic controversy. It is asked, How did He who was in the form of God

empty Himself? and Continental divines have set themselves to answer the inquiry. Some explain that the pre-existent Logos, after the Incarnation, suppressed the manifestation of omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience; others believe in the pre-existence of the soul of Christ, and that a change in its condition is intended by the apostle. There are other theories on the same subject; and what we now state is intended to show what an amount of keen thoughtfulness has gathered round the Christology of the New Testament. How remarkable therefore is the unison of belief respecting our Lord's divinity and humanity, which, amid all these differences, has obtained and still obtains the consent of Christendom. The agreement which prevails appears the more valuable when viewed in connection with surrounding diversities. And moreover it should be recollected that, except among the old subtle-minded Greeks, these controversies never had any fast hold on Christendom; as it regards the Kenotic discussion, that is confined to a few theologians, chiefly German scholars.

Coincidences of belief since the Reformation may be thus stated. The Augsburg Confession speaks of two natures, divine and human, being inseparably conjoined in unity of person—so conjoined as not to be confounded. The Council of

Trent adheres to the early orthodox creeds. The Helvetic Confession corresponds with the Lutheran. The Church of England, in its second Article, declares that the Godhead and manhood were joined together in one person so as never to be divided. The Westminster Confession uses in chapter 8 the following expressions:

“The Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man’s nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin.”

Symbols of other evangelical denominations, including the Baptist, the Wesleyan, and Independent, less scholastic in phraseology, nevertheless harmonize with the earlier ones in substance.

3. The redemptive work of Christ is presented in early patristic literature more in a religious than a theological form. It was not subjected to scientific analysis, but accepted in a devotional temper, Scripture language respecting the priesthood and sacrifice of the Redeemer being commonly employed. Language, scarcely amounting to a theory, in reference to Christ’s delivery of sinners from captivity to Satan, occasionally occurs, which is difficult to explain; but when we study the writings of Anselm, Archbishop of

Canterbury, in the eleventh century, we find there an elaborate argument, showing that Christ by his sacrifice and obedience made an adequate satisfaction to divine justice for the pardon of sin. This view was widely accepted by mediæval theologians, and appears distinctly, after the Reformation, in the writings of Protestant and Puritan authors. Anglo-Catholics, Thorndike and Bull for example, teach that salvation is through the satisfaction of Christ, who by his propitiatory sacrifice paid the ransom of human souls; that Christ's submission to death consummated His meritorious obedience, and that His obedience, satisfying divine justice, alone is the efficacious cause of eternal life. Different opinions as to the application of the Atonement were entertained by English theologians, but all the orthodox and evangelical were united in a belief of its infinite worth and sufficiency. The articles of the Church of England, the Westminster Confession, the Standards of Methodism, and the Congregational Declaration of Faith are all in harmony with each other in this cardinal doctrine.

We may add that the Council of Trent, while it asserted particular doctrines, which were protested against by a large part of Christendom at the Reformation—at the same time recognized

the sacrifice accomplished on the cross, though it fondly and unscripturally imagined it to be repeated in the offering of mass. Nevertheless to the Redeemer himself the Trentine Creed attributed the salvation of man.

IV.

PERSONALITY AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Spirit of God is spoken of in connection with the world's creation as moving over the face of the waters, and as striving with men in days before the flood. Gen. 1:2; 6:3. He spake to David, and His word was in the tongue of the Psalmist, 2 Sam. 23:2; prayer for His gracious and sanctifying presence is offered in the confession of the sinning and suppliant prince. The prophets refer to this divine Being again and again; but it is in the New Testament that we find the fullest revelation of his person and work. He is the subject of our Lord's memorable promise, which since his ascension has been the comfort of the church. In the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles which follow we have repeated allusions to the existence, power, and grace of the Holy Ghost. His deity and personality are indi-

cated so as to convince all Christians, with few exceptions, of his abiding presence for the illumination and sanctification of believers. References are made to the Comforter, chiefly in Scripture phrases, by early fathers; but no doctrinal exposition appears before the Nicene period; then his name is introduced as the third Person of the blessed Trinity.

Perhaps one reason may be found in the fact that in an age when the boldest treatment of the doctrine of Christ prevailed and it became a subject of general conversation, remarkable reverence seems to have been felt respecting language used in Scripture touching the mystery of the blessed Spirit. Indications of this reverence and awe are found in patristic writers of that age. At the Council of Constantinople (381) more precise definitions of the doctrine appeared, and the Spirit is described as proceeding from the Father.

After a time disagreement arose as to what is termed the *procession* of the Spirit. The Constantinopolitan decree had said the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father; afterwards came an addition, "and the Son." If by "procession had been meant that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church is to be ascribed to God and to Christ (according to our Lord's words, 'Whom the Father will send in my name,' John 14:26; and

again, 'If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go I will send him unto you,' John 16:7),'' there would have been no room for controversy on the subject, since the whole Christian church were agreed on that point. But the procession in question related to the mode of the divine existence, the secret essence of the Godhead, and an excitement arose on the subject akin to what occurred in respect to the inner relation of the Son to the Father. The controversy at length severed the Eastern and Western churches; yet it is very remarkable that all the while both churches believed that the Holy Ghost is divine, sent by the Father in the name of the Son; indeed, sent by the Son himself.

Unity of faith, after all, is seen underlying this discussion with respect to a fact the explanation of which must always remain an inscrutable secret.

The Trinity continued to be a subject of thought to Western theologians down to the Reformation, but it was more in the way of calm meditation than of personal controversy. Vain endeavors were made in quiet hours to reach clear ideas of the ineffable nature; but there were some wise enough to see how hopeless is the effort to define the incomprehensible.

Faith in the Holy Spirit as "Lord and Giver of life" has long been universally confessed, and the repetition of the Creed embodying these words conveys an impression of extensive unity among Christians in general. Sacramental theories have sadly beclouded the Scripture revelation of the Spirit's work; some of them are mischievous in the extreme; but it is a comfort to remember that in these cases his sanctifying operations are in a manner still recognized. Material water can never make clean the human heart; only the living water springs up into everlasting life. But the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, as rising above all visible ordinances, have not been forgotten by many who have lived and died in churches marked by a ceremonial which others deplore. For example we turn to the sermons of John Tauler, a Dominican of the fourteenth century: preaching from our Lord's promise of the Comforter, he explains how the Holy Ghost reproves the world of sin "and maketh a man to judge himself;" how "he reproves us for our self-righteousness," showing it is "as filthy rags;" and how he reproveth men for their judgment of others, and teaches the spirit in which they "should administer rebuke." The preacher unfolds the sense in which the Holy Ghost will "teach all things," and warns against "stopping

at the sign in the holy sacraments instead of reaching after the eternal truth signified." He points out those who are hindered from receiving the Holy Ghost by looking only to the humanity of Christ, and insists upon it that "the light of nature must be swallowed up in the light of grace."*

Since the Reformation attention has been generally turned away from inquiries in relation to the mode of the Spirit's existence, and his work on human minds for their enlightenment and sanctification has chiefly occupied the thoughts of divines and given a tone to their teaching. The Augsburg Confession in 1530, Art. 18, declares that man's will has no power to work the righteousness of God or a spiritual righteousness without the Spirit of God, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; the Homily of the Church of England (1562) for Whitsunday treats of the coming down of the Holy Ghost and the manifold gifts of the same; the copious Orthodox Confession of the Eastern Church (1643)† largely describes the fruits of the Spirit, founding the enumeration on Gal. 5:22; and the Westminster Confession (1647), chapter

* "Life and Sermons of Tauler," translated by S. Winkworth, 16, 17.

† Schaff's "Creeds of the Greek and Latin Churches," p. 356.

10, ascribes effectual calling to the Word and Spirit of God, taking away the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh, renewing the wills of men, and turning them to what is good. John Wesley and other great denominational leaders and representative divines have in their published works dwelt largely upon the Spirit's work, and Christian hymnology abounds in adoring invocations of the divine Comforter



V.

SALVATION BY FAITH.

“WITHOUT faith it is impossible to please God.” The place of faith in the forefront of divine requirements is distinctive of Scriptural religion. There is no other religion in the world which presents the same character. We are so familiar with it that we are hardly struck with the contrast it affords to systems existing through long ages all over heathendom. They require the performance of rites and ceremonies without insisting upon the obedience of mind and heart. Intellect and affection are left uncultured, and they consequently yield only the thorns and thistles of impure imaginations and destructive pas-

sions. But the aim of Revelation is to create in us a new inner life, a life of intelligent apprehension, of earnest conviction, of moral and spiritual principle; in short, a vigorous impulsive power which shall raise us above the sensual, the visible, and the transitory. The noblest systems of moral philosophy are those which call attention not so much to particular actions as to the motives out of which right actions arise. Virtue is not an outward conformity to utilitarian rules, but an inward striving after what is good according to a fixed purpose which rests upon settled convictions; and while all heathen religion and philosophy insists upon human merit, and makes that the basis of truth and hope, the gospel sweeps the idea of meritoriousness away and proclaims that by grace we are saved through faith. After all, the faith required by the Bible is in harmony with the highest ethical teachings. It lays its foundation, not on the shifting sands of expediency and fashion, but on the eternal rock of faith in God. There is a beautiful unity in the Scripture doctrine of faith from beginning to end. Abraham was father of all who believe. By faith he and all the heroes enumerated in the magnificent roll of spiritual nobility-preserved in the Epistle to the Hebrews "wrought righteousness." "The just shall live by his faith," Hab.

2:4, is the pregnant lesson of the Hebrew prophet Habakkuk; and these few words are transplanted into the New Testament three distinct times, making seed-plots, out of which Martin Luther and many others have gathered harvests for the nourishing and enrichment of Christ's universal church. Controversies about faith, or rather the relation it sustains to justification and holiness, have been rife in past ages, and have not died out yet; but at the heart of them there lies a great deal of common Christian truth, which it is desirable, though sometimes difficult, to disentangle from its surroundings.

As in other cases, so in this, the views of primitive believers respecting salvation were religious rather than theological. They regarded salvation as a whole, without distinguishing between its two sides: the one, our acceptance with God; the other, our holiness of life. A sentence in Cyprian gives the pith of their creed: "Every one who believes in God and lives in faith is found just, and long since in faithful Abraham is shown to be blessed and justified."*

All Christians were convinced that they were saved by grace through faith, though they failed to distinguish between things that differ. Augustine did not distinguish between justification and

* Epistles, p. 63.



holiness, and he mistily speaks of grace by which we are justified as identical with the infusion of divine love.* It is easy to point out differences between patristic and later theologians, while all accepted the doctrine that grace is the source and faith the instrument of salvation.

There is much wisdom in Melanchthon's remark on Augustine, that his opinion was "more pertinent and fit and convenient when he *disputed not* than when he *did*."†

Luther investigated the matter in a way not attempted before, and the outcome is given in the 20th Article of the Augsburg Confession: "Our works cannot reconcile God or deserve remission of sins, grace, and justification at his hands; but these we obtain by faith *only* when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake."

It is a mistake to suppose that at the Reformation all who remained in the Romish Church opposed the doctrine of justification by faith. At the Council of Trent, we learn from the Bishop of Belcastro that there were some who contended against the doctrine of justification by works, affirming that our works were maimed and weak.‡

Contarini published a tract§ on the doctrine of

* See Shedd's "History of Christian Doctrine," II. p. 255.

† Luther's "Table Talk."

‡ "Romanism," by the Rev. R. C. Jenkins, M. A., 106. R. T. S.

§ Paris edition, 1571.

justification, in which he states views similar to those of Martin Luther. He was anxious to promote an understanding between Roman-catholics and Lutherans. There were others of the same mind. Even Cardinal Pole, before he became Archbishop of Canterbury, leaned some way in the same direction; and so did a Spanish prelate named Carranza, who accompanied Philip II. to England when he came to marry Queen Mary. It is said when he was in London "he preached like Melanchthon" and used perilous language, which we can easily believe after reading his memoirs, where we find that he suffered severely for opinions he expressed.* It seems probable that but for the influence of the Papal court and the Jesuit order the canons and decrees of Trent would have been different on the subject of justification from what they are. There was at the time a vast deal of floating opinion in Europe, which, while it did not consolidate into Protestantism, appears in harmony with the faith of the Reformers.

The Trentine Decree includes an elaborate treatise of sixteen chapters, and the doctrinal decrees are followed by no less than thirty-three canons or anathemas. There are numerous para-

* See "Spanish Reformers," p. 186, *et seq.* Religious Tract Society.

graphs which Protestants cannot fairly object to, since they set forth the insufficiency of the law to justify man.

It is distinctly declared, "The *meritorious* cause is his most beloved, only-begotten Son, who, when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, merited justification for us by his most holy passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father."

Moreover, it is affirmed that we are said "to be justified by faith, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God."

Happily there have been in Holland and France Jansenists and Port Royalists who have clung to evangelical orthodoxy on the subject of divine grace.

We should be careful neither to minimize differences nor to magnify them; and while plucking up tares, not to overlook the wheat amid which they grow. Many spiritual members of Christ's church are more Scriptural than their creeds, and with an instinct of true piety they feed upon that which grows out of God's revelation, rejecting, perhaps unconsciously, poisonous plants which the enemy has sown in the field.

All evangelical churches cleave, as for their life, to the grand principle of salvation by grace through faith. They repudiate perilous qualifications of this principle, and in their doctrinal articles, confessions, and declarations, also in the works of their representative divines, they exhibit on the whole what is enforced by St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and St. Jude as the divine way of salvation.

VI.

THE FUTURE.

THERE is a wonderful fascination in future possibilities, and they attract the active thoughts of human minds. Accordingly one branch of theological inquiry and belief, known by the name of Eschatology, or the last things, has occupied a large amount of attention, and it forms an interesting chapter in the history of opinion. The first point which strikes us, as we look at this subject, is the *diversity* of conclusions reached; the next thing, still more striking, is the extent of *agreement* as to points underlying differences.

A wide field opens when we turn over the annals of Christendom in search of what divines

have written and people have believed respecting the second advent of our Lord, the millennium of his reign, and the glory of the church during that promised period; the resurrection of the dead at the last day; the final judgment of mankind; and the state of reward and punishment to follow the winding up of this world's history.

For more than two centuries the second coming of Christ vividly impressed the faithful, and inspired hopes of an approaching end when enemies would be cast down from thrones of power and pride, and truth and righteousness triumph over falsehood and wrong. The idea of a millennium more beautiful than the pristine age of gold, dreamed of by poets, filled the mind, in some cases with imagery too much akin to earthly things, in others with conceptions more refined and ideal. The resurrection of the dead was confidently expected to take place sooner or later, and materializing and spiritualizing tendencies were active in those who wrote upon the victory over death promised by our Lord and his apostles. Then came the notion of purifying fires to burn out the stains of departed souls, and this notion grew until a definite idea of purgatory arose and ruled the faith of Western Christendom. Its prevalency threw into the background for a long period, if did not extinguish, the hopes of Christ's

reign on earth. In after times the end of the world seemed imminent, and portents of the last day were everywhere recognized. Recovered from that panic, Christendom still fixed its gaze upon things not seen and eternal, and an immense amount of speculation obtained respecting the state of souls in the invisible realms. Martyr-saints, distinguished above others by crowns of gold, are seen sparkling in early Italian pictures of paradise restored. That paradise inspired the genius of Dante, and in his poem also the abodes of the sinful burn with fearful flames. But at the Reformation we are assured, on competent authority, that "Protestants and Catholics were in perfect accord as to the doctrine of the last things, with the exception of the doctrine concerning purgatory. The minor sects also adopted the same views respecting the second advent of Christ to judge the world, and the resurrection of the body. As regards the states of the blessed and the damned, the opinions of different denominations were modified in various ways by their respective creeds; but these differences were not introduced into the symbolical books. Fanatical notions concerning the restitution of all things met with the same fate at the hands of the Lutherans."*

* Hagenbach's "History of Doctrines," II. p. 350.

millennarianism. The author just quoted goes on to say that during the last and the present century rationalists have "sought to explain away the Scriptural doctrine of the second advent of Christ and to shorten the duration of the punishments of hell." "Nevertheless, both rationalists and supranaturalists retained the doctrine of man's personal existence after death; not only those who believed in a revelation, such as Lavater, but also the principal friends of enlightenment, declared their faith in the world to come."* Opinion now among English Christians is varied in reference to the points just specified, but the consensus of belief is larger than superficial appearances may lead some to imagine. We have stated differences in order that we may on the background of them draw lines of unity. We can summarize agreements in reference to this subject under five heads.

1. The final triumph of Christ's spiritual church. The church idea is perfectly original, revealed in Scripture, and peculiar to the Sacred Volume. Societies, of course, are as common as mankind, but the idea of a society of *this* description is found and has been entertained nowhere else. The idea of a church, visible or invisible, is confined to Christians as such; and in no place

* Hagenbach's "History of Doctrines," II. p. 462.

outside can anything like it be discovered as to the spiritual bond, one in fact of *divine* kinship, of an inward family life—different from national and political ties. And as the idea is perfectly original and unique, so, with few exceptions, it is universally recognized and maintained. The visible and invisible church are sometimes confounded, they are also distinguished; but in every case the conception remains of the whole body of real Christians, without distinction of race, being united as one blessed community in Christ. The conception is universal, or nearly so. And with it exists another—i. e., that of Christ's church being destined to endure for ever and ever. The perpetuity of it is by no sect denied. It is thought of as one grand procession marching forward to Immanuel's land, and those who share and rejoice in it sing as they march:

"Part of the host have passed the flood,
And part are crossing now."

A final triumph over all enemies is universally expected by this great "army of the living God."

2. The consciousness of souls hereafter in a state of blessedness, according to character formed in this present life, is another beautiful expectation to which Christianity gives birth, and it is diffused widely wherever Christianity is known. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,"

and "Absent from the body, at home with the Lord," are lights hung down from heaven like silver stars, such as sparkle in a Syrian sky, cheering sufferers on their death-beds and survivors mourning at the mouth of the sepulchre. The influence of this revelation is confined to no one church, and with a few individual exceptions it belongs to all who have embraced that gospel which hath brought life and immortality to light.

3. The resurrection of the body at the last day, in fulfilment of predictions made by our Lord and his apostles, is a further widespread belief. A mystery envelops that predicted wonder, and the description given of the glorified body by the apostle Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, may be said to be dark with excess of light. Theories of the body hereafter, as perfectly identical with the body now or as contrasted with it, have been and are still held—hence controversy has arisen; but all, with one accord, say amen to the prophecy, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death shall be swallowed up in victory." "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord" is a benediction coming down on mourners in the nineteenth century like music from the skies; and it harmonizes with the inscriptions, "*In*

Christo, in pace," rudely cut on the tombstones of the catacombs. The words are repeated at the present day north and south, from the Greenland-er's snow-covered resting-place to an English cemetery in Australia, and west and east, from burial parks in the United States to the Christian grave under an East-Indian palm.

4. The judgment of all mankind at the end, and the subsequent condition of the righteous and the wicked, corresponding with sentences pronounced when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, forms another article of one comprehensive creed. Viewed apart from particular millennarian opinions, a judgment of the dead, small and great, as they stand before God, has been and is accepted as a certainty, and this confession is consentaneous. "We must all appear (or be made manifest) before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. The "great white throne" and the open books (Rev. 20:11, 12) are images which affect the minds and hearts of Christians, and wherever they are realized they inspire the resolve, "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent" (which must be understood in the light of the preceding words), "we may be ac-

cepted of Him," or be found "well-pleasing unto Him." 2 Cor. 5:9.

5. And finally, the everlasting blessedness of heaven, the manifestation of the divine character brighter than ever, and the glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant—these "last things" constitute the crown and consummation of Christian hope.

An agreement thus far, through past ages, and throughout all lands where the gospel obtains, is very wonderful; the more so for the mystery of the subjects and the controversies which have grown up around them.

. VII.

AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

AT first sight it appears that little agreement can be found on this important point. Manifold differences come out in controversy with those, on the one hand, who add to the Bible much derived from other sources, and with those, on the other hand, who interpret and criticise the Scriptures in such a way as materially to detract from the compass of their teaching.

The coupling of tradition with Scripture appears at an early date in the history of the

church, and cannot be wondered at in an age close to apostolic times, when, of course, many things not written on the record would be remembered and related by persons who had conversed with the original witnesses. But, in point of fact, we learn from patristic writings that such traditions were in the earliest times employed in proof of the authority of the written Word, and it was held as a principle that nothing in contradiction of it could for one moment be allowed. The conclusive authority of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostolic Epistles, and the Apocalypse was strenuously upheld by the Christian fathers; and these works were appealed to as decisive in cases where contrariety of opinion arose. Doubts were entertained as to the canonicity of some of the books in our New Testament, but at length they were received as divine by common consent. Traditions grew and spread as time rolled on; they added a great deal out of harmony with Scripture, indeed contradictory to it; but the latter was still upheld as the rule of faith, and the former gained influence through persevering attempts to show that they were not inconsistent with Holy Writ. Different views of inspiration gradually arose; what are commonly called rationalistic modes of interpretation were adopted, and at the present day are, alas! on the

increase; but while this is to be deplored, it must not be forgotten that, even by some rationalists, a divine revelation of truth is believed to be *in* the Bible, and that no other book in the world is to be compared with it. Indeed the Book occupies at the present day in Europe, America, and other parts of the world a position such as it never did before. Translated into 250 languages and dialects, and circulated in millions of copies, it is unparalleled in honor and in influence.

Faith in the Scriptures was early required as a necessary condition of fellowship. To the Bible was assigned a position of supreme authority at the Council of Nicæa. In all controversies, doctrinal and ecclesiastical, this was acknowledged to be the highest law. Translations of Scripture into different languages were made at an early period, and vernacular versions were not forbidden by church authority until shortly before the Reformation. A competent writer goes so far as to say, "If there is any single point in which the fathers may be said to be unanimous, it is in the assertion of the absolute sufficiency of the Scriptures as revealing all necessary doctrine, both of faith and practice, and in their repudiation of every claim of authority for themselves in their interpretation of the text of Scripture."*

* Jenkyn's "Romanism," p. 71.

The inspiration and authority of Scripture were not in dispute at the Trentine Council; the point in question was the relation in which tradition stood to it. The Vulgate text was absurdly adopted as authoritative, though, as all scholars admit, it differs from the original.

It was the glory of the Reformation to give to the Bible its true place as the final and infallible standard of belief by which all religious opinions must be tested; and Martin Luther and William Tyndale laid the German and English speaking peoples under everlasting obligation by their vernacular versions of the divine oracles.

There is a general consensus of faith as to divine Scripture in the evangelical creeds of Christendom. The Belgic Confessions (1531) may be cited as an example:

“We confess that this Word of God was not sent nor delivered by the will of man, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

“We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the truth of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein.”

The sixth Article of the Church of England is equally explicit:

“Holy Scripture containeth all things neces-

sary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.”

All Protestants of every class appeal to the Scriptures as the divine authority for Christian faith.

Notions have been entertained respecting divine influence on the reason of man, so as to push down from its supreme throne the written word of God, and in this direction mystics have rushed into wild excesses.

Many Christians, who have their own ideas as to spiritual reason and the inner light, nevertheless retain a profound reverence for the written Word. The Society of Friends, though sometimes suspected by other communities, are most devout readers of the Word of God, and appeal to it in support of their distinctive views, while they are foremost among the zealous friends of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

As we close this imperfect review of the past history and present state of theology, it is well to remark that nothing contained in this tract is to be construed as meaning that differences outside the circle of such consent as we have endeavored to point out and establish are quite unimportant.

By no means. All truth is precious, "more precious than gold," and therefore its minutest particles should never be cast aside as unworthy of regard. But the errors of good men are to be dealt with charitably, and the lesson of St. Paul in the thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians demands and deserves our vigilant attention whenever we are engaged in controversy. At the same time let us remember that a law of proportion is to be observed in our estimates of theological opinions. Some things are essential, and other things, not altogether unimportant, are unessential. Rightly to measure the difference between them in certain cases is very difficult, yet an attempt in that direction is a matter of Christian duty.

VIII.

WE have endeavored to establish the fact that there is a large amount of unity, sometimes apparent on the surface of creeds, sometimes underlying diversities of apprehension in the minds of studious individuals; but beyond all this it becomes us to take notice of a deeper and more precious unity still in the experiences of spiritual life and in the utterances of devout affections.

Christian biography is a fruitful branch of

religious literature; it meets the taste, it evokes the sympathy, of untold myriads. Augustine's "Confessions," the inner life of Bernard of Clairvaux, Anselm's "Meditations," Luther's "Table Talk," the "Journals" of George Fox and John Wesley, the "Cardiphonia" and other letters of John Newton—these and many more works of the same description accord with what the Bible tells us, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Prov. 27:19. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:27, 28. Names may be discovered belonging to dark eras embedded in neglected chronicles, sparkling with Christian virtues; and it is only fair to assume, from the fact of so many men and women having left no record behind them—for it is impossible that all names should become memories—that there must have lived multitudes of like faith, love, and patience with those whom the pen of fame or friendship has rescued from oblivion. Through patristic, mediæval, and modern writings there runs an undercurrent of feeling never found in pagan writings nor in any pages of philosophy. Many of those confessions and lamentations of personal and surrounding sin to which

skeptics and partisans are wont to point for their own purposes do contradict and correct them both; for these very confessions and lamentations reveal such spiritual sensitiveness to what is wrong, such horror of impurity and selfishness, such a conviction of demerit, such sympathy with a holy God in abhorrence of wickedness in every shape, as prove more or less a realization in the writer's mind of the Christian ideal of perfect goodness. Christian unity of this kind is as precious as it has been prevalent.

It is proper to recognize varieties in spiritual life, but it is incumbent to maintain the identity of essence in them all. Whoever examines the annals of Christianity through eighteen centuries will find the same elements of power at work: faith in God's Fatherhood, faith in Christ's mediation, faith in the Spirit's renewing and sanctifying grace. Could we converse with believers of an early date or of a distant country, influenced by education and habits of expression different from our own, there might be much difficulty in arriving at a mutual understanding; but—getting below metaphysical refinements and æsthetic tastes, forms of worship and modes of ecclesiastical order and discipline—when each came to speak to the other of God as a personal and ever-present Father, of Christ the Brother and Re-

deemer of man, and of the Spirit as dwelling in the souls of the faithful, differences would be toned down and varieties harmonized, heart would answer to heart, and men divided by time, race, and circumstances would clasp hands and kneel down in love and praise before one cross and one throne.

Of all forms of Christian literature hymnology is foremost and chief as an expression of united faith. From a hymn to Christ the Saviour, composed by Clement of Alexandria (A. D. 200), down to contemporary hymns familiar to all English congregations, there flows one stream of melody to the honor and glory of Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his redeemed people; and with it there mingles the recognition of those main truths set forth in the present tract.

The languages are many, the tone and spirit are one; Greek, Latin, German, French, English, they vary in forms of thought and terms of expression, but the same sentiment runs through them all. Bernard, Luther, Watts, Wesley, and a number of American hymn writers are scarcely distinguishable in this last respect one from another. Take as example the two following, the first by Bernard, the second by Ray Palmer:

“Jesus, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see
And in thy presence rest.

"Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind!

"Oh, hope of every contrite heart!
Oh, joy of all the meek!
To those who fall how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek!

"But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show!
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but his loved ones know!

"Jesus, our only joy be thou,
As thou our crown wilt be,
Jesus, be thou our glory now
And through eternity!"

"My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly thine!

"May thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As thou hast died for me,
Oh, may my love to thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be,
A living fire!

"While life's dark maze I tread
And griefs around me spread,
Be thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From thee aside!

"When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold sullen stream
 Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Saviour, then in love
Fear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above,
 A ransomed soul!"

One of the best living hymn writers of the Church of England replied to a Presbyterian editor who requested permission to use one of his compositions, "I gladly give you the permission you ask. It is to me a great pleasure to feel that thus communion among God's people is deepened and widened by the circulation of those aspirations to him which he has put into many hearts, but which he has not given all lips equally the power to express. Are not our hymns drawing us all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity nearer to each other every day? It is remarkable how Christians occupying different sections in the great family unite in choosing the same words in which to utter praise."*

This interchange of hymns is one of the best religious signs of the present age. Some years ago we were sojourning in a Swiss hotel in company with ministers of different denominations, chiefly representatives of High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church divisions; but one

* "Christ in Song: Hymns of Immanuel, selected from All Ages," by Philip Schaff, D. D.; Preface, p. 8.

Sunday evening we joined in singing hymns composed by various authors within the range of our English Christendom; and cheering was it to find how cheerfully we could all join in common notes of adoration and love to the one glorious Redeemer. "This is a true evangelical alliance," exclaimed one of the party. We thought of it as a preparation for singing the new song with the elders before the throne.

There is a vast difference between unity of faith in Christendom and unity of faith in other religious divisions of mankind. No other system has ever reached the position occupied by Christianity. The circumstances under which it obtained such a width and variety of assent and rooted its main doctrines in the hearts and lives of men render its history something perfectly unique. Religious systems in distant lands have no doubt to a wider numerical extent won support from the inhabitants of those lands. But the remarkable circumstance is that such religions have been local in their character and in their constitution as well as in their range and influence. They have sprung from a particular soil, they pertain to particular races, and they are thoroughly identified with particular national customs and habits. Idiosyncrasies in the minds of the people have laid hold upon observances suited

to their tastes, and these observances have been cultivated with an ardor inherent in the nature of the votaries adopting them. This is true of Brahminism and Buddhism. They are local, geographical. They belong to the East and to the East alone. There they abide and flourish, but beyond certain longitudes they do not move. They have no place in the West, have never been acclimated in European countries. The same may be said of Mohammedanism, with certain modifications. It is of Arab origin; and when the Moors conquered Spain they built mosques in Cordova and other cities, and they read the Koran there in schools and colleges; but their religion was of one race; hence on their expulsion it could no longer live in the region to which it had been transplanted. The Moslem faith expired in Spain when left by the Moslem race. In striking contrast with that history are the facts which have been adduced on these pages. Christianity in its substantial beliefs at the present period girdles the globe as it never did before. It is adapted to the Oriental mind, and equally so to the Anglo-Saxon. The elementary creed which we have attempted to indicate is adopted by people in every part of the earth; and, we may add, if some phases of Buddhist philosophy are finding favor with a few intellectual circles in Europe, they

scarcely touch the average minds of our countrymen, and certainly do not penetrate the humbler classes of society; whereas the doctrines of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and of salvation by grace through faith, and of holiness as essential to religion, are appreciated and prized by the humblest Christian minds; thus a wide intellectual as well as spiritual education is carried on wherever the church of Christ has found a home.

IX.

WE reserve for the conclusion of this tract that upon which the whole of our review is intended to bear, namely, the proof it affords of the divine origin and preservation of Christianity. No religion resembles it in this respect, that it extends into every portion of the globe, and prevails most in those countries which take the lead in modern enlightenment and freedom of thought, differing in this respect altogether from Hindooism, Buddhism, and Islamism; and yet, with diversities of race and locality, Christians unite in holding fast the fundamental principles we have imperfectly described. This in itself is a surprising fact. And when we come closely to examine these principles we find they are as *peculiar*

as they are important. They are not shared by any people outside Christendom, that is, outside the sphere of gospel influence. The spirituality and Fatherhood of God, the true moral condition of mankind, the gracious possibilities held out to them through the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus, his ineffably glorious nature and character, the personality and purifying work of the Holy Spirit, salvation, not by human means, but by divine faith, and promises of a blessed future in this world and the next—these characteristics are its own exclusively, presenting altogether an aspect entirely unique. Its literature—devout and experimental as well as doctrinal and historical—also finds no parallel in any other connection, and the whole appeals to the mind, heart, and conscience on intellectual and spiritual grounds, apart from anything like coercion. At the same time this literature relates to facts which, though fully substantiated, are confessedly mysterious, and to ideas which, though manifestly practical in their influence, are refined and sublime, and in some respects incomprehensible in their nature. Hence, looking at the distinctions of race and the idiosyncrasy of individuals, we see that diversities of apprehensions and inferences respecting the gospel of Christ were sure to arise. The wonder is that deeper and

wider differences, going down to the very foundation, splitting and overthrowing every part of it, did not arise at an early period. Assuredly that would have been the case had not a divine hand laid the cornerstones and a divine Spirit preserved the edifice. Finally, it should not be forgotten that there is an aversion in human hearts to the humbling doctrines of Christianity which many who have embraced them, to their after joy, found it at first hard to overcome. This the New Testament anticipated, and what has actually taken place fulfils the prescient anticipation. Therefore what we have said serves to supply a branch of Christian evidence often overlooked, but which when examined is found to be most satisfactory to unprejudiced minds.

THE
EVIDENTIAL VALUE
OF THE
OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY.

BY

REV. G. F. MACLEAR, D. D.

ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

THE force of the evidence in favor of a belief derived from public services contemporaneous with its origin, and uninterruptedly perpetuated throughout the body which holds it, is pointed out. The earliest evidence for the observance of the Lord's day is adduced. The testimony of St. John and St. Paul on the subject, in the light of their nationality and training, and the significance of the term "the Lord's day," are examined. It is pointed out that the observance of the day, though not enacted by a law in the Apostolic church, yet grew up and made its way by the intrinsic weight of some overwhelming reason for it. The question. What was this reason? is answered, and the conclusion is arrived at that the historical fact of the resurrection of the Lord alone affords an adequate explanation of its origin and observance.

THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE

OF THE

OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY.

SECTION I.

1. It has truly been observed that "no evidence of the power and reality of a belief can be less open to suspicion than that which is derived from public services which, as far as all evidence reaches, were contemporaneous with its origin and uninterruptedly perpetuated throughout the body which holds it."*. Among these public services none is more striking than the observance among all Christian nations of "the Lord's day."

2. However the observance of this particular day may have originated, here it is. It has lasted through more than eighteen hundred years. It has survived many storms and revolutions. During these centuries the most di-

* Westcott's "Gospel of the Resurrection," pp. 131, 132. Ed. 3.

verse political systems have been established and overthrown. Empires, dynasties, kingdoms, have passed away. New worlds have been discovered. The very languages which were spoken during the early period of these centuries have given place to others. Habits, manners, modes of thought, theories, opinions, philosophies, have changed. But the observance of this day, "the first day of the week," as a day set apart for religious worship, still survives. Except for a brief period of madness during the reign of terror in France, the observance has known no discontinuance, and has won for itself the reverent acquiescence of some of the greatest intellects the world has ever seen.

3. During these eighteen hundred years there have been various enactments put forth respecting the observance of this day. Passing over those of modern and mediæval times, let us take one which is found among the decrees of the first Œcumenical Council of Nicæa, A. D. 325. We find it laid down by the fathers there and then assembled that,

"Forasmuch as some on the Lord's day bow the knee in prayer, as also on the other days of Pentecost, for the sake of uniformity they now shall stand to offer their prayers to God."*

* Council Nic. Can. 20.

4. What is noticeable here is that the members of the Council, assembled as they were from the most diverse parts of the Roman world, yet make no doubt as to the obligation of this day. They do not ordain it. They do not defend it. They assume it as an existing fact, and refer to it quite incidentally for the purpose of regulating an indifferent matter—the posture of Christian worshippers on this day.

5. Four years previous to this Council we find the Emperor Constantine, A. D. 321, laying it down in an edict, which was to apply to Christians as well as pagans, that there should be on the first day of the week a cessation from business on the part of functionaries of the law and of private citizens. The emperor does not indeed call it the first day of the week. He terms it the “venerable day of the Sun.” But he does not anticipate that his Christian subjects will misunderstand him or object to the observance here prescribed. Nor do we anywhere read of their doing so. They acquiesce in the prohibition of business on this day, and therefore we may presume they deemed they had reason for doing so. The expression “day of the Sun,” our Sunday, was quite familiar to the Christians in the times of the emperor, and in this edict he calls the day by a name which, as it was in or-

dinary use, could not possibly offend his heathen subjects.* What is worthy of remark here is that, like the authors of the Nicene Canon, Constantine offers no word in defence of the obligation to observe the day. With them he equally assumes that this will be at once recognized.

6. Pursuing our course still further back, we find, in the year A. D. 300, Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, 'saying, "We keep the Lord's day as a day of joy,"† and in a Synodical letter, issued in A. D. 253, we have Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, mentioning as a notorious fact the celebration of "the Lord's day," which is at once "the eighth and the first."‡ Tertullian, speaking about fifty years before (A. D. 200) of the solemnity of the Lord's day, calls it sometimes "Sunday," sometimes "the first day of the week."§ About the year A. D. 170, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, puts forth a treatise respecting the day, and Dionysius, Bishop of Sardis, writing to the Church of Rome, mentions its observance quite casually and with-

* "Omnes judices urbanæque plebes et cunctarum artium officia venerabili die Solis quiescant." "Let all judges and peoples of towns, and the duties of all professions cease on the venerable day of the Sun." See Richard Baxter's remarks on this decree in his treatise on "The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day," p. 41.

† Τὴν κυριακὴν χαρμοσύνης ἡμέραν ἄγομεν.

‡ See Dr. Hessey's "Bampton Lectures," Lect. 1, 2.

§ Tertull. "Apol." c. 6; "De Cor." c. 3.

out any word of explanation. If we go back thirty years we come to Justin Martyr, who flourished in A. D. 140. He mentions the first day of the week as the chief and first of days, and states that on it is held an assembly of all who live in the cities and in the rural districts, on which the writings of the prophets and the memoirs of the apostles are read.* Still earlier, about A. D. 112, Pliny the Younger, writing as governor of Pontus and Bithynia to the Emperor Trajan, describes the Christians as accustomed to meet together on "a stated day" (*stato die*) before it was light, for the purpose of worship.†

7. The catena is thus fairly complete during the second century. From the letter of this heathen proconsul it is but a step, whether we take the earlier or the later date of its composition, to the Apocalypse of St. John. Writing from his place of exile to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, he says without a syllable of comment or explanation, as though his meaning would be at once understood, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."‡ . But still earlier, in a letter written by St. Paul from Ephesus, A. D. 57, to the Church of Corinth, the apostle

* Justin Martyr, "Apol." 1; "Dial." c. "Tryph."

† Pliny's Letters, 96.

‡ Εγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ. Apoc. 1:10.

says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16:2. The authenticity of this letter is not denied by the most remorseless modern criticism; and as he assumes that the Corinthians observe this day, so we find the apostle observing it himself. Thus we read of his spending a week at Troas, and when "on the first day of the week" the disciples were "gathered together to break bread," he "discoursed with them." Acts 20:7, R. V.

8. Now what is very singular is that we never find the dedication of this day to religious worship made a matter of question or argument. It is never elaborately defended against objectors. It is accepted without dispute by St. Paul, St. Luke, and St. John, by writers of the sub-apostolic age, by Constantine in his imperial decrees, by the Fathers of the Council of Nicæa in their Canons. I say the assumption of a valid reason for the observance of this day, without any explanation or labored apology, is very remarkable. It is obvious that for some cause or other it was deemed that the observance of the day could command an instinctive assent. The inquiry, therefore, naturally suggests itself, What were the grounds that justified it?

SECTION II.

1. THAT its observance needs justification will be apparent on very little reflection. For St. Paul, who thus speaks of the "first day of the week," and St. John, who represents himself as having been in the Spirit on "the Lord's day," had been brought up in the strictest principles of Judaism.

2. Let us deal first with St. Paul. Finding it necessary on one occasion to defend himself against certain false teachers who prided themselves on their purely Jewish extraction, he emphasizes with particular minuteness the purity of his own descent. "Are they Hebrews?" he asks, and replies, "So am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I." 2 Cor. 11:22, 23. On another occasion, writing to the Galatians, he describes himself as being "advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of his own age among his countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of the fathers." Gal. 1:14, R. V. Once more, addressing the men of his nation at Jerusalem, he says, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of

the law of our fathers." Acts 22:3, R. V. On yet another occasion he says, "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees." Acts 23:6, R. V. Thus St. Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

3. Next let us take St. John. Though he never was, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, at one of the Rabbinical schools, yet he was a Jew of Northern Palestine, and while unacquainted with the glosses of tradition, he kept the old simple faith in the letter of the law. Once and again his zeal broke out against those who did not think as he did, Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49, and against those who, like the Samaritan villagers, refused to treat his Master with hospitality. Luke 9:54. In the Acts we find him keeping the feast of Pentecost, Acts 2:1, frequenting the temple, observing the Jewish hours of prayer, and conforming to Jewish usages. Acts 2:46; 3:1.

4. The writers, then, who first employ these remarkable expressions were of Jewish nationality, and had been brought up under all the influences that moulded the life of the elect nation. Now, undoubtedly it is true that the forefathers of the nation had been unable to resist the spell of the various idolatries practised by the peoples lying around the Holy Land, and neglected the observance of the time-honored Sab-

bath. But the Jerusalem of the age of the Prophets was not the Jerusalem of St. John and St. Paul. It was necessary for the prophet Isaiah to utter solemn warnings against the profanation of the day, Isa. 58:13, 14, and for Jeremiah and Ezekiel to denounce the violation of it as one of the greatest of the national sins. Jer. 17:21-27; Ezek. 20:12-24. But during the dreary years when the people went into captivity, and "hanged their harps by the waters of Babylon," all this was changed. The same impulse seized them under which the Christian world of the sixteenth century sprang back, over the whole of the Middle Ages, either to the primitive or to the apostolic times. The return from the captivity marks the rise of the Puritan period of the Jewish Church.*

5. After the times of Nehemiah and Ezra, Neh. 10:31; 13:15-22, there is no evidence of the Sabbath being neglected by the Jews, except by such as fell into open apostasy. 1 Macc. 1:11-15, 39-45. From the Gospels we learn that the Jews in our Lord's time laid the most marked stress upon the observance of the Sabbath; and the minute rules imposed respecting it, and the slightness of the acts whereby its sacredness could be impaired, receive constantly

* Stanley's "Jewish Church," III. p. 31.

recurring illustration. The nation might be oppressed and apparently crushed by the stern power of Idumæan or Roman rulers, but the slightest effort to enforce customs not authorized by the Mosaic law was the signal for an outbreak of zeal and fanaticism which bore down everything before it and from which even the boldest statesmen recoiled. The Maccabæan generals at first declined to fight against Antiochus or to defend themselves on the Sabbath, "Because," says Josephus, "they were not willing to break in upon the honor they owed the Sabbath even in such distresses, for our law requires that we rest on that day."*

Later leaders, Mattathias and Jonathan, allowed their countrymen to repel but not to attack an enemy on that day. The Jewish historian, however, bears the most complete testimony to the strictness with which the day was observed,† and the sneers of Horace, Juvenal, and Persius‡ bear out the statement that wherever the Jew went the observance of the Sabbath became the most visible pledge of his nationality.

* Jos. "Ant." 12:6, 2.

† Jos. "Ant." 14:4, 2; 18:9, 2.

‡ "Hodie tricesima *Sabbata*. Vin tu

Curtis Judæis oppedere?"—Hor. "Sat." I. IX., 69.

"To-day is our thirtieth *Sabbath*. Do you desire to offend the circumcised Jews?"

6. So great, indeed, was the reaction after the return from the captivity, so intense the readiness to resent the slightest departure from the enactments of the law, that the Idumæan Herod could not set up in the theatre the representations of the victories of Cæsar, or place the Roman eagle on one of the portals of the temple, without producing a violent outbreak of popular excitement.* On another occasion, the Roman governor Pilate, under cover of night, ventured to introduce the military standards into Jerusalem. In the morning the populace awoke to the consciousness of this insult to their strongest prejudices. Abstaining from all violence, they sent a deputation to the governor at Cæsarea, entreating him to remove the standards. For days the ambassadors crowded his pretorium; and when Pilate brought out his troops to overawe and disperse

“Quidam sortiti metuentem *Sabbata* patrem

Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant.”—Juvenal, “Sat.”

XIV. 96.

“Some, whose lot it is to have a father paying respect to
Sabbaths,

Worship nothing except the clouds and the divinity of the
sky,”

and Ovid, A. A. I. 76, “Cultaque Judæo *septima* sacra
Syro”—“And the festival of the seventh day observed by
the Syrian Jew;” Persius, “Sat.” V. 184, “Labra moves tacitus
recutitaque *Sabbata* palles”—“You move your lips in silence
and turn pale at the circumcised *Sabbath*.”

* Jos. “Ant.” 15:8, 2; 17:6, 2.

them, they flung themselves with one accord upon the ground and there remained immovable for five days and as many nights, declaring with vehemence that they were ready to die rather than sanction any infringement of their law, so that in the end Pilate was constrained to withdraw the obnoxious emblems.* Later still, the insane edict of Caligula, demanding that he should receive divine honor and that a golden statue of himself should be placed in the Holy of Holies,† while in other provinces of the empire it met with little or no resistance, excited among the Jewish nation the most violent hostility. The polished Athenians sighed to see the heads of some of their noblest images struck off, and the trunks carried to Rome to be united to the features of a barbarian emperor. But it was a sigh for the insult offered to art, taste, and feeling; it was not a sigh for the profanation of their religious principles which they resented.‡ The Jews, on the other hand, were ready to resist even unto blood any insult offered to their national faith and the Mosaic law.

7. But what were the violations of the religious sentiment of the nation either actually carried out or attempted by a Herod, a Pilate, a

* "Bell. Jud." II. IX. 2-4.

† Philo *in Flacc.* c. 7. *Leg. ad Caium* 26; Sueton. *Calig.* 22.

‡ Merivale's "Romans under the Empire." VI. 45.

Caligula, compared with the conduct of those who for the first time practically transferred the honor due to the ancient Sabbath to "the first day of the week"? What was the ignorant disregard of time-honored scruples on the part of heathen rulers compared with the startling practices of these daring innovators? They, at any rate, could not plead ignorance or unconsciousness of the popular feeling. Brought up from earliest childhood in the strictest observance of the Mosaic law, they retained many of their religious customs. Acts 1:14; 3:1. They were found at the fixed hours of prayers joining in the temple worship; they observed the great annual festivals, Acts 20:16; they conformed even in minor points to many legal and ceremonial enactments. Acts 21:26. And yet in one most momentous particular they did not scruple to disregard the fondly cherished tradition of the nation. To the Jew the Sabbath was the weekly commemoration of the rest of God after the creation. "Remember," said the great Lawgiver, "the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Exod. 20:8, 11. "Israel was the people to whom God had revealed the mystery

of creation, that master-truth by which human thought is saved now as of old from the sin and folly of confounding God with his works. It brought before the Jew the ineffable majesty of the great Creator, between whom and the noblest work of His hands there yawns an impassable abyss."* And yet, though no one could have felt the force of this more completely than St. Paul, he does not scruple to run counter to the prejudices and feelings of his nation on the subject.

8. He seeks out his countrymen, it is true, in their synagogues, Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, on the Sabbath, and there expounds to them the Hebrew Scriptures; but when he celebrates a service of his own what do we find? Take the case when he reaches Troas and abides there seven days. What does he do? How does St. Luke's narrative run? Does he say, "On the last day of his stay Paul called the disciples together to break bread, and preached unto them"? Is this what we find? Instead, we read, "On *the first day of the week* Paul preached unto them." Acts 20:7. When again he bids the Galatians and Corinthians, 1 Cor. 16:2, make a religious collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, he directs that it shall be carried out on the selfsame day.

* Liddon's "Easter Sermons." II. 92.

9. How comes it to pass that the first day of the week has already become the stated day of Christian assembling* for breaking the bread, for receiving instruction, for collecting alms? Why do we never find the apostle inculcating the carrying out of these duties on the seventh day? What motive had he for making or even conniving at this change from the seventh to the first day? When we reflect on the traditions amid which the apostle had been brought up from his earliest years, on the force of the religious ideas which had been to him as the atmosphere he breathed, the fact that he acquiesces in the change and gives no elaborate explanation of it is very remarkable. That such a revolution of sentiment should have emanated from such a soil as Judaism is very startling. It calls for some adequate explanation consistent with its occurrence at the time it did, and at a historic epoch of which we can assign the date.

SECTION III.

1. BUT there is something still more surprising. St. John speaks of himself at the outset of the Apocalypse, and says in the passage to which reference has already been made, "I was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God

* See Hessey's "Bampton Lectures," p. 40.

and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on *the Lord's day*." Apoc. 1:9, 10.

2. What did he mean by this expression? There is no real reason for doubting that by "the Lord's day" St. John meant what St. Paul terms "the first day of the week."* But what is especially noteworthy is the solemn and momentous name which St. John applies to it, and which the Christian Church in every age has agreed to bestow upon it. He calls the first day in the week *ἡ Κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*,† "the Lord's day," and thus connects it by its very name with a person.

3. What did he mean by this term? It is a very uncommon one. It occurs here, and here only. The adjective *Κυριακός* denotes "belonging to a lord or ruler." It occurs in two places only throughout the entire New Testament. It is found here, and St. Paul uses it in the eleventh chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he calls the Eucharistic feast the "Supper

* Some indeed, as Eichhorn, understand the Lord's day to refer to Easter Day, but this is quite improbable. Others maintain that it means the day of judgment. But the great "day of the Lord" in this sense is expressed by *ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Κυρίου*, 2 Thess. 2:2, R. V.; or *ἡ ἡμέρα Κυρίου*, 2 Pet. 3:10; or the "day of Christ," *ἡμέρα Χριστοῦ*, Phil. 2:16; *never* by *ἡ Κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*.

† Apoc. 1:10, *ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*—in Latin, *dies dominica* from which in the Romance languages the first day of the week derived its name. Ital. *Domenica*; Span. *Domíngo*; Fr. *Dimanche*.

of the Lord," τὸ Κυριακὸν δείπνον. Now the name Κύριος, Lord, is applied to Christ frequently in the New Testament.

Thus (a) there are texts in which He is called Lord in the various acceptations of Master over servants, Matt. 10:25; 24:45, 46; of prophet or teacher, Matt. 8:25; 16:22; Luke 9:54; 10:17, 40; John 11:12; 13:6, 9, 13; 21:15-17. Again (b) He is so called as one who has acquired a peculiar right to those over whom He exercises authority in virtue of the price which he has paid for men. Eph. 6:9.; Col. 3:24; 4:1; Rom. 14:9.

4. But there is a still higher sense in which Christ is Lord. Of the names of God, Jehovah is the most sacred and the most solemn. A Jew who believes in Judaism will not pronounce it. Those who read Hebrew with him are at once warned that they are expected to substitute for it the word Adonai.* The name itself was long ago withdrawn from the popular speech of the nation, and even from their writings, till at length it lingered only in the mouth of the high priest, and was only uttered by him on rare and necessary occasions, such as the Day of Atonement,† while as he uttered it those who stood near cast themselves with their faces on the

* See the little treatise of the Bishop of Derry on the "Divinity of our Lord," p. 27.

† Stanley's "Jewish Church," III. 162.

ground, and the multitude responded, "Blessed be the Name, the glory of his kingdom is for ever and ever."* This name, as applied to God, denotes that He is "the Eternal," "the Self-existent," the great I AM. Exod. 3:13, 14. By the Septuagint writers it was translated *Kύριος*, Lord, and the translation was adopted by the writers of the new Testament, and applied to Christ so repeatedly that it became His usual designation. Thus St. Thomas, addressing Him, says, My *Lord* and my God," John 20:28; St. Peter speaks of Him as "*Lord* of all," Acts 10:36, "whose is the glory and the dominion unto the ages of the ages," 1 Pet. 4:11; and St. Paul affirms that whereas He was originally before His Incarnation "in the absolute form of God,"† "God blessed for ever," Rom. 9:5, as the reward of his humiliation God "gave unto Him the Name which is above every name, that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9-11; comp. Acts 2:36; Rom. 10:9.

5. Now it is a word recalling this name, sur-

* Edersheim's "Temple Service," p. 271.

† Phil. 2:6, *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων*; see Bishop Lightfoot's note on the force here of *μορφῇ* and *ὑπάρχων*.

rounded by all these august associations, that St. John does not scruple to apply to the first day of the week when he says he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. He not only connects the day with a Person, but that Person is one with whom divine attributes could be associated, and would be so associated by those who read or heard the term he employs.

6. But there is still something to be added. It is true that the Jewish nation had days for commemorating great and rare passages of divine providence in their past history. But what single day had the Jews ever kept in honor of any particular person, however holy or exalted? Where is to be found any trace of the celebration of a day in honor of Abraham, the father of the faithful; or of Moses, the great lawgiver; or David, the founder of the royal line; or of Judas Maccabæus, the restorer of the national glories? True it is that they had days on which they commemorated mighty deliverances and signal marks of the divine favor. But on which of these had their thoughts ever been directed to a single person with whom they could associate, as indicating his day, words which, whether we take their lower or their higher sense, had been ever associated with Deity? What powerful and constraining motive could have induced

men trained in Judaism to detach themselves from every association of the past, and passing by the honor due to the time-honored Sabbath, advance higher claims to observance for a day hitherto unheard of in connection with sacred memories?

7. Had St. John defended the expression with a long and labored apology it would not have been so surprising. The necessity of the case would seem to have called for it. But we have not a word of explanation, not a syllable of defence. He does not assume that his readers will be the least surprised at it or take offence at his use of it. Artlessly, fearlessly he mentions it in the most incidental manner. The expression falls from his pen so casually and unconsciously that we almost forget what it implies. The boldness of the claim made for the day, that it could be connected with a Person, and that He could be for some reason entitled to the "ineffable Name" which his countrymen could not even pronounce, passes all conception. They to whom the writer was chiefly addressing himself knew and felt that the Jewish covenant was the most sacred thing in the universe, and the Sabbath one of its most characteristic institutions, and yet without a single word of explanation he speaks to them of another day which he does not

scruple to consecrate by a name of sacred and mystical meaning and to associate with a person. Are we not justified in asking, Did something occur on the first day of the week to the person thus commemorated which could justify its being termed His day? If there was something, the application of the term is in some decree accounted for. If there was not, its use by St. John remains an insoluble enigma.

SECTION IV.

1. WHO, then, was this Person? The answer to the question will not be disputed. All the churches, Western and Oriental, agree with unbroken unanimity that the day called by St. John the Lord's day, was the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. How had St. John been connected with Him? Himself the son, apparently the younger son, of Zebedee and Salome—Mark 15:40; 16:1, compared with Matt. 27:56—natives of northern Galilee, he had been brought up in the simple Jewish faith of the simple-hearted people of the neighborhood of the Lake of Tiberias. Devoted to his father's pursuits as a fisherman on the lake, Mark 1:19, he yet shared the passionate longings and enthusiastic hopes of his country-

men as regarded the coming of the Messiah. When the voice from the wilderness proclaimed His advent, John at once responded to that voice, and moving southward, ranged himself among the Baptist's disciples.

3. But he did more than this. Though simple and unlettered, Acts 4:13, and unskilled in the traditions and speculations of the schools, he had grasped with singular power the spiritual import of the Baptist's message. He no sooner heard the mysterious words, "Behold the Lamb of God," than he obeyed the sign and followed his new Master. John 1:37.

4. After remaining with Him for a time, he seems to have gone back to his old employment. From this he is again called to become a fisher of men, Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:1-11, and to form one of the apostolic body. In this body he forms with his brother James and St. Peter "the chosen three," who at the raising of Jairus' daughter, Mark 5:37, at the transfiguration, Mark 9:2, and in the Garden of Gethsemane, Matt. 26:37, are admitted into nearer relationship with the Lord than the rest. But in this group, though St. Peter takes the lead, it is St. John who is nearest and dearest to the Lord, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." On more than one occasion, as has been already indi-

cated,* he displays loyal and true though undisciplined zeal, and reveals the ardor of his Galilæan temper and his burning love for his Master.

5. On the occasion of the last journey to Jerusalem, Salome, as the mouthpiece of her two sons, Matt. 20:20; Mark 10:35, begs that they may sit, the one on the Master's right hand and the other on His left, in His kingdom. This reveals, in spite of his close relationship with Christ, the earthly ambition of the son of Zebedee and the fact that he had failed to comprehend the nature of His kingdom. But it is important. For it makes manifest the sort of kingdom to which he is looking and the sense in which he would at this time have interpreted such an expression as "the Lord's day." He would have regarded "the Lord's day" as meaning the day on which the Master to whom he was so devotedly attached did actually assume the sceptre and ascend the throne to which in His messianic dignity He laid claim.

6. But did his Lord assume a sceptre or ascend a throne? Did He, as an earthly sovereign, place one of the sons of Salome on His right hand and the other on His left? We will not seek an answer from any Christian writer. Tacit-

* See above, p. 10.

tus, the Roman historian, shall reply to the question. We turn to the 15th Book of his "Annals," and the 44th chapter. He is describing the burning of Rome in the reign of Nero and the circulation of a rumor that it was brought about by an imperial order. "To get rid of the report," he writes, "Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called by the populace Christians." Then he adds: "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius, at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus."

7. Has the fact thus recorded ever been disproved? Has its accuracy ever been invalidated? Never. The reign of the Emperor Tiberius has been described not only by Tacitus, but by Suetonius and other authors of good repute, and the crucifixion of Him, whom St. John called his Lord, is mentioned by them as a matter of common notoriety, and gives point to many a cruel and opprobrious epithet directed against His followers.*

8. The mention of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius fixes the chronological limits of the date

* Comp. Lucian, *de Morte Peregrini*, c. 11.; Origen, c. *Celsum*, VII. 40; Arnob. *adv. Gentes*, I. 36.

of this crucifixion, and of the infliction of the extreme penalty which Tacitus records. It cannot be pushed much farther back than the year A.D. 30, and this is the year generally accepted as its date. It is important to notice this. It places us in distinctly historic times. It is not a period hidden in the mists of fabulous ages. It is a period of which we know a great deal. It had its archives, its registers, its monuments. We can examine them and cross-examine them, and the statements of Tacitus relate to the actions of one of the most practical people the world has seen, at the most practical period of their history, when their roads, their bridges, their baths, their aqueducts were scattering the memorials of those who erected them in all parts of the world.

3. Does St. John anywhere deny what Tacitus records? Nowhere. What the Roman historian mentions in a single paragraph he proclaims wherever he goes. In his own narrative of his Master's life it is described with the minute particularity of a diary.* Three other Evangelists also give equally full descriptions. However condensed their accounts may be in recording other portions of our Lord's life, here they agree to relate fully every detail. Without attempting to conceal a single particle of its shame, the writers

* See Canon Liddon's "Bampton Lectures," VIII. 475.

record carefully the fact of their Master's death. One of His disciples, they tell us, had betrayed Him to his foes. One of them, and he one of the chosen three, had basely denied that he ever knew Him. Where was St. John? He was by His cross. Where were the rest? They had forsaken Him and fled.* This is his own account of the matter in his own Gospel. He neither hides nor disguises, he neither palliates it nor excuses it. With singular openness, with unexampled particularity, he tells us the story of the cowardice and faithlessness of his companions. What interest he had, or others who have told the story with him, in describing the actors as worse than they really were, it is difficult to see and it is impossible to understand.

10. But there is still another document to be put in, which has been already alluded to, and which, like the testimony of Tacitus, comes to us not from a Christian but from a heathen writer. About the year A. D. 112, the younger Pliny,† then acting as governor of the province of Pontus and Bithynia, informs the Emperor Trajan of the appearance within his province of a new and strange superstition, which “had already affected many of all ranks, and even of both sexes, had

* Observe the singular force of St. Matthew's words, 26 : 56.

† Pliny's *Epist. ad Traj.* 96.

caused many of the temples to be almost deserted, the sacrifices to cease, and the sacrificial victims to find few purchasers."

Respecting the members of this strange sect, he had, after inquiry, discovered "that they were accustomed to meet together on a stated day (*stato die*) before it was light, and to sing hymns to Christ as to a God, and to bind themselves by a *sacramentum*, not for any wicked purpose, but never to commit fraud, theft, adultery; never to break their word, or to refuse, when called upon, to deliver up their trust."

11. What is worthy of note here is that the celebration of a particular day by the Christians, for of these Pliny is speaking, had become so marked as to impress the heathen with its distinctive character as a "status dies," and that this day was the first day of the week, the Lord's day, is indisputable. The votaries of this strange superstition sang hymns to Christ "as to a God." The day therefore was regarded as a day of festal joy and thanksgiving.

12. But what reason could they have given for singing on this day hymns in token of joy and thanksgiving? Had not the Christ in whose name they met together been crucified? How comes it to pass that they can salute Him as a God? Suppose any one of those early Christians

had unfolded a scroll containing the memoirs which were then in circulation of Him who died, what would he have found to have been the condition of His disciples at His death? According to their own confession, he would have read that they were stupefied with despair and overwhelmed with disappointment. Why then did they not try to efface all recollection of the terrible fact? Why did they not acknowledge that they had been the victims of delusion in accepting Him as their Lord, and own their untoward mistake? Would not this have been natural? Is it not what we should have expected under the circumstances? How comes it to pass, then, that instead of this, the selfsame men who confess their stupefaction at His death are found, Acts 1:14, after a brief interval, in the very city where there would be the greatest disinclination to believe and the greatest solicitude to confute their statements, where the counterproofs were all in the hands of their enemies, proclaiming their belief in Him who had died the death of the malefactor and the slave, and electing a fresh member of their body in place of one who had betrayed Him? Acts 1:21-26.

13. How comes it to pass that we find that after the hopeless ignominy of the scene on Calvary, one like St. Paul could have been induced

to transfer to the first day of the week the sacredness of the Sabbath of the Mosaic law, and on it to celebrate the Eucharistic feast which, except on one supposition, commemorated the complete disappointment of the hopes of the Christian body? What could have induced St. John to call this first day of the week the Lord's day, which could only, except on one supposition, serve to remind him and the members of the Asiatic Churches of a terrible and tragical reversal of all his expectations as to the setting up of his Master's kingdom?

14. I say, *except on one supposition*. What is this? Except on the supposition *that after the scene on Calvary some event took place as certain and as historically true as the death there enacted, glorious enough to transfigure the desolation of that scene and powerful enough to turn all its sorrow and shame into joy and triumph*. If such an event took place, then we can understand how St. John came to speak of the first day of the week as the Lord's day without adding a word of comment or explanation, as though he was alluding to a custom already well understood and already accepted by the Christian Church. If such an event took place, then we can comprehend why those votaries of a strange superstition in Pliny's province "sang hymns to Christ as a God," and met on a

fixed day to celebrate His memory. The words of Tacitus, it is plain, though undisputed for their historical accuracy, cannot contain the whole account of the matter. They do not give us a shadow of a shade of reason for the mysterious observance of this particular day ever since apostolic times. The motive for the observance of the old Sabbath of the Law on the seventh day was clear and intelligible. It rested on a divine ordinance. To alter it was unpardonable, unless there was an overwhelming reason for making the change. But what was this reason? Did any event occur which made the change imperative?

SECTION V.

I. WAS there, I repeat, such an event?

The Christian Church in every age has assured her children that there was. The author of the Epistle which contains the earliest allusion to the observance of "the first day of the week" informs us that after the crucifixion He "who suffered under Pontius Pilate" was buried. 1 Cor. 15:4. Herein he agrees with the narrative of the four Evangelists, who, one and all, tell us that the holy body of their Master was taken down from the cross and laid in a tomb hewn

out of the rock in a garden hard by Calvary, in the possession of Joseph of Arimathæa.

2. They are careful to inform us—with what object it is difficult to see, unless it is true—that even this act of kindness and consideration was due not to any of the original apostolic body, but to secret disciples and comparative strangers, Matt. 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42—Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus. The former, who had begged the body of Pilate, John 19:38, and the latter, who had brought a “mixture of myrrh and aloes,” John 19:39, to embalm it, made the necessary preparations, and conveyed the holy body to the tomb, placed it in a niche of the rock, rolled a great stone against the entrance, and went their way.

3. In that tomb the body lay during the Friday night that followed the crucifixion, and the succeeding Saturday and Saturday night, protected by a guard of Roman soldiers, whose presence had been requested by the Jewish rulers, from the intrusion alike of friends and enemies. Matt. 27:62-66.

4. But early in the morning of *the first day of the week** the stone was found to have been

* Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1. Each of the four Evangelists lays special stress on the fact that it was the *first day of the week*.

rolled away, and the sepulchre was discovered to be empty. If, however, the sepulchre was empty, where was He who had been laid therein? *He was no longer there. He had risen, even as He had said.* This is the unanimous testimony of the four Evangelists and of St. Paul in his indisputably authentic letter to the Corinthians. This is the fact which, in spite of contempt and obloquy, the loss of caste, and the sacrifice of all that makes life tolerable, in spite of the bitterest hatred and the keenest persecution, the first disciples made it their business to proclaim as no less historical than their Master's Passion. This is the event which, as they affirmed, transfigured the shame of the cross and turned its desolation into triumph.

5. But not only did He rise again on the first day of the week, but on the selfsame day He revealed himself on *five distinct occasions* to "chosen witnesses." Acts 10:41. On this day He was seen by Mary of Magdala, Mark 16:9, 10; John 20:11-18, by the other ministering women, Matt. 28:8-10, by the two disciples journeying to Emmaus. Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-35. On this day He appeared to St. Peter, 1 Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:34, separately, and to the ten apostles gathered together in the upper room at Jerusalem. Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23.

He was seen indeed afterwards. But on no day is He recorded to have "manifested himself" so often. Never was He busier than on the world's first Easter Day. No day would be associated in the memories of the first disciples with more frequent proofs of His triumph over death. No day by the record of more multiplied incidents established its claim to be called "the Lord's day."

6. *On the third day He rose again from the dead!* M. Renan, in his "Life of Jesus," lays down this axiom, "Great events have always great causes."* We have been seeking an adequate cause for one of the most striking phenomena of religious life among the most cultivated nations of the earth—the observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's day; and in the resurrection of Christ we find it. In each of the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans—a group recognized as genuine among the most skeptical writers and critics—the literal fact of the resurrection is regarded as the groundwork of the teaching of the apostle Paul. He does not treat the fact ideally, but historically. He does not regard it as the embodiment of a great hope, or as the consequence of some preconceived notion of the person of Christ. On the contrary, he

* See Godet's "Lectures in Defence of the Christian Faith," p. 128.

rests his hope on the fact, and deduces his view of Christ's nature from the literal event of His rising again.*

7. Twice when our Lord was asked by the Jewish authorities for a miraculous sign in attestation of His divine claims, he referred those who pressed him for such a sign to his resurrection from the dead. His other miracles were "signs." This was to be "the sign." If He gave it, and rose triumphant from the tomb, we have the clew to what has taken place. If He did not, to what are we to look for the origin of the observance of the first day of the week as His day? When we remember the soil in which the observance of the day first took root, we have a measure of the depth of conviction which must have been needed to break with old and time-honored associations and bring about its institution at all.

8. If, after undergoing all He did on the cross of Calvary, He in whose honor the members of the new sect in Pliny's province of Bithynia "sang hymns as to a God," passed away like other men, and still "lies in the lorn Syrian town," how is it conceivable that a man like St. John could have kept the Lord's day as one of religious obligation? What would have justified him in countenancing the change of day from

* See Westcott's "Gospel of the Resurrection," p. 109.

one already consecrated by the divine law? What could have induced him to sanction an institution which must have involved a shock to the prejudices of every pious member of his nation?

9. What possible reason could he have urged as imperative for inaugurating or countenancing so unique an observance? Was it because the death on Calvary was a martyrdom? But what aspect of a martyrdom did it present to the eyes even of the most attached disciple of Him who died? It sealed no national cause. It crowned no patriotic rising. It recalled no daring enterprise vainly though courageously undertaken against the Roman power.* The bandits, indeed, who died by the side of Christ *were* not improbably regarded by the bystanders as martyrs. We read of no mockery of *them*. We hear of no bitter gibes cast in *their* teeth. Blasphemy and scorn were reserved for Him who occupied the central cross.† His death was the last drop in the cup of a complete and crushing disappointment of all the hopes and aspirations of His followers. Were they likely to enshrine in such an institution as "*the Lord's day*" what could only

* See the "Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist," the Boyle Lectures for 1879.

† See Archbishop Trench's "Studies in the Gospels," pp. 293, 294.

have been the tale of their defeat and the memory of their error?

10. Was the honor due to the seventh transferred to the first day of the week because He who died thereby inaugurated a new covenant between God and man? The seventh day, indeed, as kept by the Jews did commemorate a covenant ratified by God through the hands of a Mediator. But what proof of the acceptance of His death as a sacrifice was vouchsafed if, in spite of all that He had said, death proved in the case of Christ, as in that of all others, the "great conqueror"? Could the death on Calvary, if it stood alone and nothing followed, be claimed as inaugurating a new and better covenant? "A whole world of the most divine ideas," it has been said, "lies in our seeing aright the distinction between the Sabbath and the Lord's day!"* And yet that distinction came in a moment to the twelve! Within nine days after the voice had been heard saying, "It is finished; Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," we trace the earliest beginnings of the observance of the first day of the week.† But on what possible ground did the apostolic body meet again on that

* Prof. Milligan's "Lectures," p. 68.

† Comp. John 20:26, "And after eight days again the disciples were within."

day, if, after disappointing every hope they had ever cherished, their Master died and was no more seen? What valid answer to the question is there, if nothing distinguished the first day of the week from all others?

II. The early observance of the Lord's day, whether we reflect on the period when it began, or the previous training of those who first accepted it, or the renunciation of old beliefs which it implied, or the total and overmastering change of thought and feeling in reference to a time-honored institution like the Sabbath which it involved, remains, and ever must remain, an absolutely unintelligible phenomenon without the fact of the resurrection. It can be accounted for neither by an imaginary death nor by a visionary resurrection. A visionary resurrection runs up in the last analysis into a fraudulent resurrection, connived at by the most passionate teachers of the duty of veracity. The observance of this day is too solid a fact to repose on a foundation of mist. A "splendid guess," a "vague but loving hope," the dream of an enthusiast, the vision of credulous disciples—these will not account for an objective fact as indubitable as the institution and continued observance through so many centuries of a day so peculiarly designated as the Lord's day. They will not bear the superstructure.

12. The resurrection, on the other hand, by the fact of the absence of any human agent as its author, takes its place on a level with the most prodigious of miracles—that of creation. To summon into life and to recall to life are two acts of the same nature. “Creation is the victory of Omnipotence over nothingness; the resurrection is the victory of the same power over death, which is the thing most like to nothingness that is known to us.”* Science has done wonders, and in the world of science much has been accomplished to justify the words of Sophocles,

“Many the things that mighty be,
And none is mightier than man.”†

But no man of science cherishes even the distant hope that he can undo the work of death or keep death indefinitely at bay. The resurrection is a creative act of the first order. It cannot stand as an isolated fact. He who said, “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again,” John 10:18, spake as never man did or could speak. By his taking again his life he proved that he was more than man, that he was—God. He linked together the first creation,

* Godet's “Lectures,” p. 43.

† Sophocles' “Antig.” 332:

Πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ, κύνδεν ἀνθρώπου
δεινότερον πέλει.

which is the primordial fact in the history of the universe, with a new creation, of which He too is the author and the source. The old Sabbath, with its commemoration of rest after the works of the first creation, was swallowed up in the new creation wrought by the Lord of life on the first Lord's day. The light streams in on the unique expression of the beloved disciple, and we see what he intended, we feel we "stand no longer at the foot of Sinai, but by the empty tomb in the garden outside Jerusalem."

13. Let us sum up. The resurrection alone as an actual fact explains how it came to pass that the Lord's day

(1) grew up naturally from the apostolic times;
 (2) gradually assumed the character of the one distinctively Christian festival;

(3) drew to itself, as by an irresistible gravitation, the periodical rest which is enjoined in the Fourth Commandment under the Mosaic law;

(4) could as an observance be alluded to by St. Paul and St. John without a word of comment or explanation;

(5) and, though not enacted by any law in the apostolic church, could grow up and make its way by the intrinsic weight of its own reasonableness.

14. With the fact of the resurrection the early

observance of the Lord's day runs smoothly into the context of the world's history, and we can explain

(1) How the startling change of religious sentiment was brought about.

(2) How in spite of the shame of the cross the Christian society could gather up and concentrate itself in adoration round the person of Him who died upon the cross.

(3) How St. Paul could speak of Him who so died as "the firstfruits of them that have fallen asleep," for "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:20, 22.

(4) How He, whom the apostle John saw in vision on the Lord's day, could say of himself, "I am the First and the Last and the living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." Apoc. 1:18.

(5) How since this event took place ten thousand times ten thousand Christian congregations have gathered themselves together on the Lord's day in all quarters of the world, and have joined, if not in the words, yet in the spirit of the hymn:

"On this day, the first of days,
God the Father's name we praise,
Who, creation's Lord and spring,
Did the world from darkness bring.

“On this day the eternal Son
 Over death his triumph won;
 On this day the Spirit came
 With His gifts of living flame.”

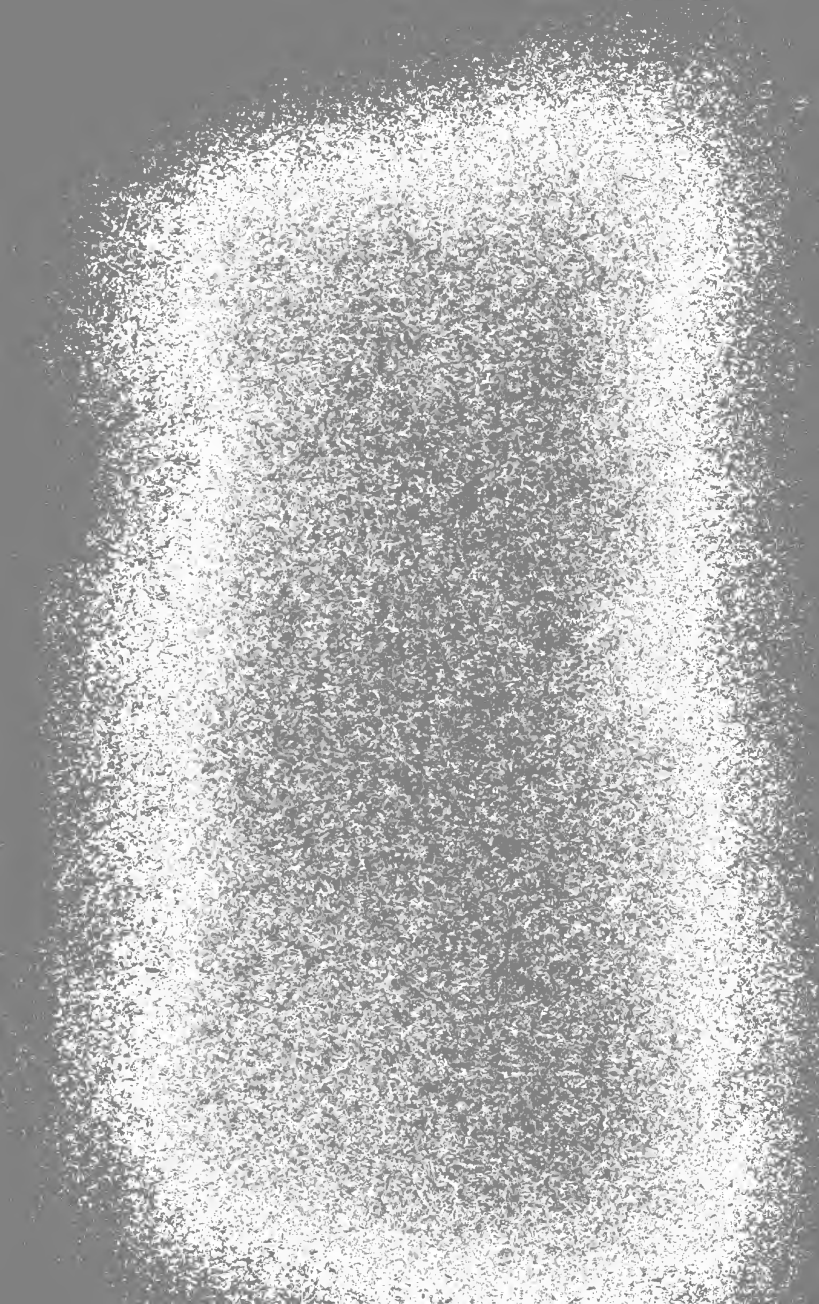
15. Can any one explain how otherwise these facts are to be accounted for? “The miracle of miracles,” says Prof. Freeman,* “greater than dried-up seas and cloven rocks, was when the Augustus on his throne, Pontiff of the gods of Rome, himself a god to the subjects of Rome, bent himself to become the worshipper of a crucified provincial of his empire.”

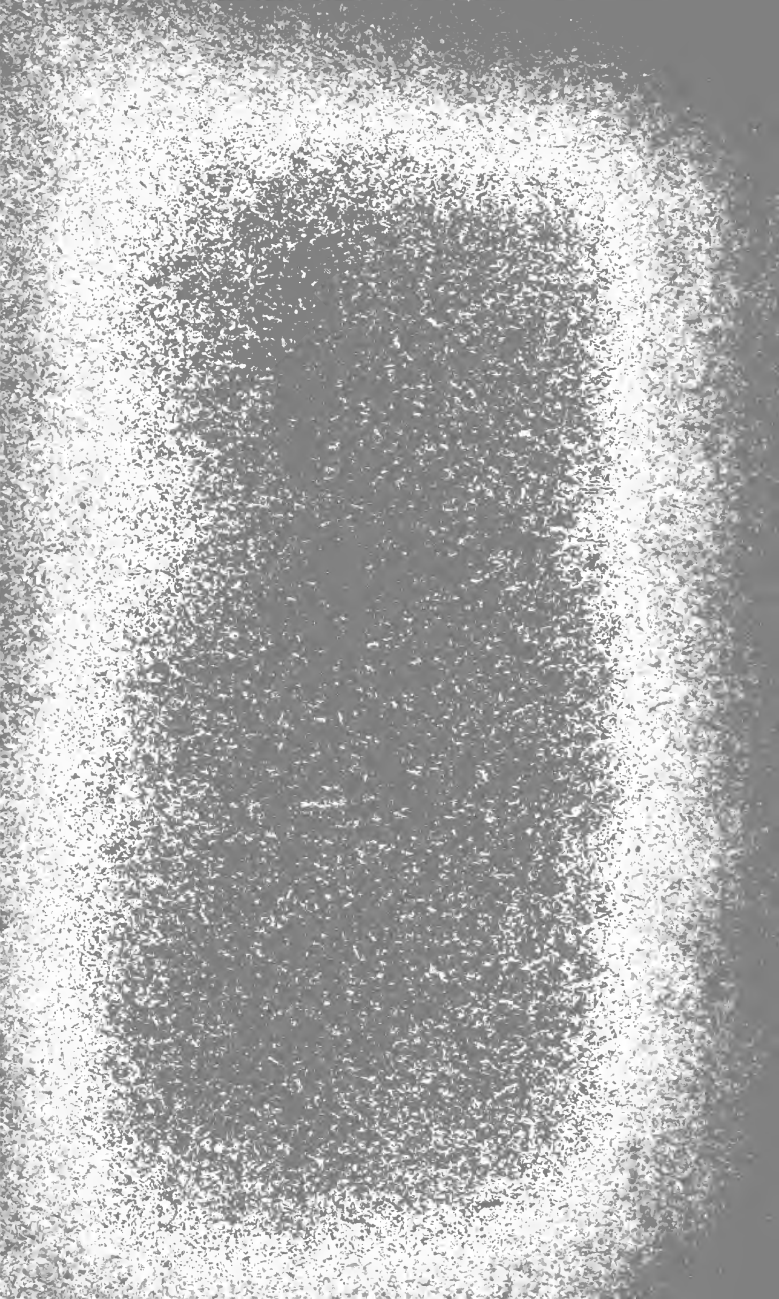
But why did he so “bend himself,” if that crucifixion was followed by no event which transfigured its shame? Why did he sanction the observance of the first day of the week as a day of joy and triumph? Why have the most civilized nations of the world acquiesced in its observance? The question demands an answer. But without the resurrection what answer can be given that is not imaginary merely and invented?

* “Chief Periods of European History,” p. 67.











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